THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

THE GREAT PIONEER FAMILY PAPER OF AMERICA.

Vol. 76. PUBLISHED WEEKLY, AT No. 726 SANSOM ST. Philadelphia, Saturday, September 12, 1896. FIVE CENTS A COPY. $2.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. No. 11

TWO LITTLE HANDS.

BY T. L. R.

Once, on a summer day divine,
Two little hands fell into mine;
How pink they were! how frail and fine!
Each one a crumpled velvet ball,
So soft, and so absurdly small,
Ah me! to hold within them all
Life's tangled and mysterious skein,
The mingled threads of joy and pain,
Whose hidden ends we seek in vain!

O! fast the years have fled away;
Two little hands, at work or play,
Still bide with me the livelong day;
Now on some wilful mischief bent,
And now to loving service lent,
Now folded—sleepy and content—
The dimpled fingers curled, like those
Sweet jealous leaves that cling and close
About the red heart of a rose.

I kissed them with a passionate sigh;
The quick fears spring, I scarce know why,
In thinking of the By and By!
How will they build, these little hands,
Upon the treacherous, sifting sands?
Or where the Rock eternal stands?
And will they fashion strong and true
The work that they shall find to do?—
Dear little hands, if I but knew!

Could I but see the veiled Fate
Behind yon barred and hidden gate!
Yet trusting this my love must wait!
O! when perplexed no more by these
Tear-blinded ways, my wanderings cease
In the sweet valleys of His peace;
Beyond the dark, some heavenly sign,
Some clue, however faint and fine,
Shall guide these little hands to mine!

OUT OF THE NIGHT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FROM GLOOM TO SUNLIGHT," "LORD LYNNE'S CHOICE," "HER MOTHER'S SIN," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

"I shall be the first Vivianne who has ever done anything of this kind," he said to himself, yet all the same he resolved to do it.

Having wrought himself up to this height of heroism, it was humiliating in the extreme to find it all in vain—he could find no trace of the girl he intended to marry.

Whether she had left him in a fit of pique because he had not married her, whether she had gone away in a sudden access of sorrow and regret, he did not know. He was only sure of one thing—she was gone.

Had she left him for any one else, or in one of her sudden caprices? She was capricious enough for anything—it was just one of the things that she was likely to do.

For all he knew, she had been near him all the time; she was quite capable of that. He knew that to her his long search, his fever of anxiety, his despair, would only be a comic entertainment; yet, knowing all this, judging her as he did, believing her to be capable of almost anything, still he could not help loving her with the whole force and power of his soul; it was the influence that a wicked woman does obtain at times over a wicked man, and it is stronger than any other.

He came to England at last, despairing to hear any news of her abroad.

He argued to himself that if she were still in Italy he should certainly have heard of it; a face like hers could be remarked anywhere; he should have heard of this golden-haired beauty, whose style of loveliness was one so rarely seen in sunny Italy.

He had been in London now for some weeks, but he had heard nothing, and was puzzled what to do next.

He never dreamed of looking for her there, in the upper world of fashion; he had no idea, not even the faintest, of ever seeing her.

If she were the reigning star in any other world, he would have heard of her long before this. With his mind so perplexed and agitated, his soul tossed on a tempest of love, he had no thought to spare for any one else. Let people rave about Lady Studleigh, let her be as beautiful as she would, she could not surpass Doris.

In the meantime Lady Studleigh was creating a sensation to which the fashionable world had long been a stranger. She was the queen of the season.

Hyde House was the most popular resort in London; to be admitted there was to have the entree to the most exclusive circle; to be unknown there was to be unknown to fame.

It was not often that one house held two such w men as the Countess of Linleigh and Lady Studleigh.

The countess was all grace, and suavity, and high breeding; Lady Studleigh all brilliancy, beauty, and wit. Even old courtiers, who had seen some of the first beauties of both empires, declared there was nothing to equal her.

Another great attraction to all clever people was the constant presence of the now famous poet, Earle Moray, at Hyde House. His conversation was a great charm, although some, wiser and more thoughtful than others, said it was hardly right to expose a young and talented man like Earle Moray to the constant fascinations of Lady Doris Studleigh.

She bore her triumph with a certain grand calm, that impressed her parents wonderfully.

"Race does tell, after all," said the duchess, as she watched the young beauty. "Any other girl would have shown some elation at the great amount of admiration offered—Lady Studleigh shows none. After all, race will tell."

Invitations came for a royal ball, and it was remarked by all present that the whole of the royal circle seemed to look upon the proud young beauty with great favor.

Then came invitations to a royal concert. One of the young princesses, whose marriage was then on the tapis, declared that she would have the Lady Doris on the list of her bridesmaids. No fete was considered a success without her—a ball without Lady Studleigh was almost a failure.

"That girl has homage enough paid her to turn her head," said the earl, laughingly to his wife.

The countess sighed.

"My dear Ulric," she said, "I think it would require a great deal to move either her heart or her head; both seem to me equally safe."

"You always sigh when you speak of Doris. Why is it, dear?" asked Lord Linleigh.

"I can not help wishing that she had less beauty and more love," she replied. "There are many perils in this world—perils of soul and of body—but I think the greatest of all is certainly the perils of beauty."

"I think you are right," observed the earl; "but we must hope, having escaped so far, she will escape the rest."

CHAPTER LIX.

"YOU are not looking quite so well as usual this morning, Doris," said Lady Linleigh. "You are nervous, too; you start at every sound! What is wrong, dear?"

"Nothing," replied Lady Doris, "but that I did not sleep well. I had a most unpleasant dream."

"What was it?" asked the countess.

"About Italy—about some one I knew, I saw there. Only a foolish dream, and I am foolish to mention it."

"Of all people in the world, you are the last I ever should have imagined to know what being nervous meant."

"I am not nervous," replied Lady Doris, quickly. "It would annoy me very much to hear any one say so."

But though she indignantly denied the fact as being a very discreditable one, she looked pale, and the laughing eyes had lost something of their brightness.

She started at every sound; and once, when a violent peal from the bell sounded through the house, Lady Linleigh saw that she dropped the book she was holding.

Much did the countess wonder what had affected her fair young daughter. Yet it was such a trifle, such a foolish dream that had caused her to stop for one moment in her career of triumph, and look at the possible dangers in store for her.

She dreamed that she was walking in a pretty wood near Florence, when suddenly the tall trees began to assume the most grotesque shapes; huge branches became long arms, all trying to grasp her, leaves became fingers trying to detain her.

No sooner had she eluded the clutch of one giant arm than another was stretched out toward her. In vain she tried to elude them.

Then she heard her own name called out in a voice which, with a strange thrill of fear, she recognized as Lord Vivianne's. Then she saw him standing underneath one of the giant arms, and he held a long, shining knife in his hand.

"I have been looking for you for some time," he said; "now that I have found you, I mean to kill you, because you were faithless to me."

She tried to escape, but the giant arms clutched her, the fingers clasped round her, the shining steel flashed before her eyes, and she awoke—awoke to feel such fear as she had never before known.

She took herself to task for it. Suppose that the worst should come, that she had to meet him again! Was it likely that in this altered position he would know her? It was most unlikely, most improbable.

Suppose that she met him in a ballroom—where it was most probable they would meet—and they were introduced to each other as strangers! Well, even then, she had nerve enough, courage enough, to look at him and fail to recognize him.

She would, at the worst, solemnly swear that he was mistaken, and he—well, for his own sake, it was most improbable that he would dare to mention the terms on which they had lived.

Nothing but shame and dislike of all good people could follow such an avowal on his part. It would do him ten thousand times more harm than good.

"So that I need not fear," she said to herself. "I have no reason to be afraid, even if I should meet him face to face today."

She did not feel the least regret or remorse for her sin. For her lost innocence, her fair fame, her soul's welfare, she cared but little—yet she would have given much if she had avoided this wrong; not because it was wrong, but because the penalty of it might be unpleasant.

In the bright heaven of her full content it was the one dark cloud; to the full glory of her most brilliant triumph it was the one drawback.

Ah! if they knew—if the royal hearts that leaned so kindly toward her even dreamed of what she had been—farewell to her sweet dream of court favor.

If the innocent young princess who had professed so much liking for her only ever so faintly suspected one half of the horrible truth, farewell to all kindly words! Why, if the handsome earl, her father, dreamed of it, he would send her adrift at once.

She shrugged her white shoulders and said to herself, over and over again, that she must keep her secret. When she was married, her fortune assured, settled upon her beyond recall—then it would not matter so much.

Besides, there were ways out of all difficulties. She held up her white-jeweled hands, and looked steadfastly at them.

"Smaller, weaker fingers than these have robbed a man of his life," she said to herself. "If the worst comes, I have an example in history that I should know how to follow."

And indeed it would have fared badly with any one who stood in the path of Lady Doris Studleigh.

There was a great dinner that evening at Hyde House. A Russian grand duke, a German prince, and just the very elite of London, were among those present. The Countess of Linleigh was a perfect hostess and in Lady Doris Studleigh's bright presence there was never any want of brilliancy or wit.

It was Lord Charter who mentioned her lover's name. He turned to Lord Linleigh and asked him if he had seen Lord Charles Vivianne lately.

Lady Doris was sitting near him, so that she distinctly heard the question and the answer.

"Lord Vivianne!" replied the earl; "I do not even know him.

"I had forgotten," said his questioner, "how long were you absent from England; of course, you would not know him."

"It seems to me," said the earl, laughing, "that a whole generation of young men have come into fashion since I left the country. I do not recollect having ever seen Lord Vivianne. Why do you ask me?"

"I heard him say how anxious he was to be introduced to you," replied Lord Charter.

"I shall be very happy," replied the earl, indifferently.

She had listened at the very first sound of that name which she had grown to hate so cordially; all her attention had been fully aroused.

"Now for the Studleigh courage," she said to herself, and she listened. The color did not fade from her beautiful face; her lips never lost their smile, nor her eyes their light.

When Lord Charter had finished his conversation with the earl, she turned to him in the most winning manner.

"Vivianne, did you say? What a pretty name? Is it English?"

"Yes," he replied. "Most ladies admire the name and the bearer of it."

"Is he a great hero?" she asked, her eyes bright with interest and innocence as she raised them to his face. "Is he a great statesman?"

"No," was the reply; "I am sorry to say he is a great flirt."

"A flirt!" she repeated, in a voice full of disappointment. "I thought you meant that he was some one to be admired."

"So he is admired, for his handsome face," replied Lord Charter.

She repeated the name again, as though she were saying it softly to herself.

"Is there a Lady Vivianne?" she asked, after a pause.

"Not yet," was the reply; "but from what I hear there is a prospect of one." Then he laughed a little. "You are a stranger among us, Lady Studleigh; you will hardly understand that, at one time or another, almost every prominent man in London had been jealous of Lord Vivianne."

"Indeed! He must be a paragon, then."

There was something of a sneer in her voice, but he did not perceive it.

"Not exactly a paragon, Lady Studleigh; but—I repeat it—a flirt."

"And he is to be married, you say? I should not imagine the lot to be a very bright one for the lady."

"You take things very literally, Lady Studleigh. I can not vouch for the fact that he is going to be married, but there is a rumor afloat that we all enjoy very much. It is that, after flirting half his life-time, Lord Vivianne is caught at last."

She tried to look politely indifferent. Great heavens! how her heart was beating, how every nerve thrilled, how intense was the excitement! She had not known how frightened she had been at the idea of meeting him until now!

"I am afraid," said Lord Charter, "that you do not take any interest in my friend."

"Yes, I do. To whom has he surrendered his liberty at last?"

"No one knows," was the answer, given with an air of candor that would at any other time have greatly amused Lady Doris. "There is a mystery about it. Lord Vivianne has been spending some little time in Florence, and there it is supposed he fell in love with a princess in disguise."

Despite the Studleigh courage and her strong nerve, she could not prevent herself from growing pale; her heart beat loud with a terrible fear; the lights seemed to swim in one confused mass before her eyes; then with a violent effort she controlled herself.

"Florence," she repeated; "he went far enough afield for his romance. Why was the princess disguised?"

"It may be all nonsense. I have heard many different stories; some say that his heroine was really a person of low birth and humble position. I can not tell; I only know one thing."

How her heart beat as she repeated these two words.

"One thing! What is it?"

"Why, that love, or something else, has quite changed Lord Charles Vivianne. He used to be gay, good-humored, slightly cynical; now he is gloomy, sullen, and bad-tempered. I heard a friend of his say that he seemed to be always looking for some one."

The beautiful face, in spite of all her efforts, grew paler.

"Looking for some one? What a strange idea!" she said.

"Perhaps the lady refused him, and he wants to be revenged. Perhaps she jilted him, and he is looking for her," laughed Lord Charter, little dreaming how near he was to the truth.

If it had been to save her life, she could not have uttered another word.

Lord Charter went on to relate some brilliant anecdotes of people he knew, and she affected to be engrossed in them, although she did not know one word that he was saying. Then, when he paused, she said:

"It is a strange world, this London; it seems to me full of hidden romances."

"You will say so when you have been here for a few years longer," he replied. "I have seen far stranger romances in the lives of my friends and acquaintances than I have ever read in books."

She was mistress of herself now; the first deadly pain of fear had passed; her heart had ceased to beat so quickly; the color came back to her lips and face.

She wished to make a good impression on this Lord Charter, so that if he spoke of her to her former lover, he could praise her simplicity, her innocence, her ignorance of the world and its evil ways. That would be altogether unlike the cynical, worldly Doris he had known.

Most admirably she assumed the character; indeed, her proper vocation would have been the stage—she could play any part at a moment's notice.

As he looked at her beautiful face, her bright, clear eyes, the sweet smiles that played around her perfect lips—as he listened to the low, musical voice, admired the high-bred simplicity, the innocence that was a charm, the utter want of all worldly knowledge—Lord Charter said to himself that he had never met such a wonderful creature before; while she congratulated herself on the impression she had made.

CHAPTER LX.

"SHALL you go to the opera to-night, Doris?" asked the countess as they lingered over a cup of chocolate. "I think—do not imagine I am overanxious—I think you require a little rest, dear. You are new to this life of excessive excitement and gaiety."

"I find it very pleasant," said Doris, with a smile.

"So it is; I do not deny that. But, remember, I am a veteran compared to you. I have been through many seasons, and I know the fatigue of them. Take my advice, and rest a little if you feel tired."

"I do not think I could rest," said Lady Doris.

And there was something sad in the tone that the countess had never heard before. She looked anxiously at her.

"That is what has struck me," said Lady Linleigh. "Your face is flushed, your eyes are too bright; the very spirit of unrest is on you.

"You have done too much. Do you know that every time the door opens you look round with a half-startled glance, as though half dreading what you will see."

"Do I? How absurd! It is simply a habit. I have nothing to dread."

"Of course not; but it seems to me rather a pity for you to get confirmed in nervous habits while you are so young."

Lady Doris laughed, but it seemed to the countess the ring of music was wanting in the sound.

"I shall correct myself, now that I know," she replied.

Then Lady Linleigh crossed the room, and laid her hands on the golden head. She bent down and kissed the beautiful face.

"Do not be annoyed that I am so uneasy over you, Doris; I love you almost as though I were your own mother."

The low voiced trembled, and the calm eyes grew dim with tears.

"My own mother?" repeated Lady Doris, and for once something like the music of true feeling sounded in her exquisite voice. "You are too young, Lady Linleigh, to be quite like my own mother; you are like an elder sister to me. I wonder if things would have been very different for me if she had lived, and I had known her?"

"Different?" asked the countess, eagerly. "In what way could they be different?"

"I wonder if she would have been fond of me—if I could have told her all my girlish follies and troubles? I have an idea that no one can be like one's own mother."

The soft, white arms tightened their clasp around the fair neck.

"Doris," said the countess, gently, "could you not fancy that I am your mother, and talk to me as freely as you would have done to her?"

The lovely face was raised with an arch glance.

"Dear Lady Linleigh," was the reply, "I am only sentimentalizing. Do you think me serious? I have no secrets. I should not know what to say to my own mother were she here. Do not take any notice of my idle words."

Then she laughed. "I could never, even in my dreams, put you in my mother's place. I have a shrewd idea that my handsome papa married some poor, pretty girl for her beauty's sake—you are the daughter of a mighty duke.

"A truce to sentiment! Why, Lady Linleigh, your eyes are wet with tears! We were talking of the opera—I must go to it. It is 'Ernani' this evening, and I have the music."

"Earle will go with us, of course," said the countess.

She had unclasped her arms from the girl's neck, and had gone over to the little writing-table, beating back her emotion with a strong hand.

"Yes," laughed Lady Doris, "Earle will go. Earle is rapidly becoming a popular man. I am not quite sure whether I ought not to be jealous of him. The Marchioness of Merton positively introduced him to Lady Eleanor yesterday, and declared him to be a 'most promising young man!'"

Lady Linleigh laughed at the perfect mimicry of voice and accent.

"I see no one to compare with Earle," she said, at length, "and I think you are a very fortunate girl, Doris."

"To tell the truth, I am well satisfied with my good fortune, and with Earle," she said, quietly, as in good sooth she was. She even wondered at herself, but the truth was she was growing passionately fond of Earle.

The secret of it was that he was so completely master of her, that she had learned to have the highest respect for him—that hers, the weaker, had recognised his, the master soul.

In his presence she was learning to conceal her thoughts. As time passed on, and a wiser, fuller consciousness came to her, she grew more and more ashamed of that dark and terrible episode of her life.

Rather than Earle should know it, she would die any death; rather than his eyes should look coldly upon her, his lips speak contemptuous words to her, she would suffer anything, so completely had his noble nature mastered her ignoble one.

His grand soul obtained an ascendency over her inferior one—she loved Earle. The time had been when she had simply amused herself with him, when she had accepted his love and homage because it was the only thing that made life endurable to her. That time had passed. She loved him because he had conquered her, and because he was supreme lord and master.

Lady Studleigh had never looked more beautiful, perhaps, than on this evening when she had decided upon going to the opera. She wore an exquisite costume of blue velvet and white lace, the color of which made her more than ever dazzling fair.

The white arms, with their glorious curves, the white neck, with its graceful lines, were half shrouded, half disclosed by the veil of white lace.

The golden hair was studded with diamond stars; a diamond cross, which looked as though it were made of light, rose and fell on the white breast. She carried a beautiful bouquet, the fragrance of which seemed to float around her as she moved.

Was it a wonder that as she took her seat in the box, all eyes were directed to her? A beautiful woman is perhaps one of the greatest rarities in creation, but in the hands of a beautiful woman there rests a terrible power.

As she sat there, the light gleaming in her jewels, the golden hair with its sheen, the blue velvet and the crimson of the opera box, she made a picture not easily forgotten.

The countess, gracious, fair, and calm, was with her; Earle, his handsome face glowing with admiration and pride, stood by her side. The earl was to join them later on in the evening.

It was a brilliant scene. Some of the fairest women and noblest men in London were there. Lady Doris was, or seemed to be, engrossed by the stage; she affected the most sublime and complete unconsciousness of the glories of admiration; she was thinking to herself, as she was always thinking lately:

"Now, if he, Lord Vivianne, should be here, should suddenly come to speak to me, I must affect the most complete unconcern and indifference."

While her eyes were fixed on the stage, while so many were looking at her, some with admiration, some with envy, that was the thought which occupied her.

The dread, the expectation of meeting him had been strong upon her ever since she heard that he was in London. It could not possibly be otherwise.

She knew herself to be the beauty of the season; he, of course, as an eligible man, would mix in the same circles, and they must meet.

She was brave enough, but there were times when, at the bare idea of it, the color faded from her face, leaving it ghastly white; great drops would stand on her forehead; she would clasp her hands with a cry of agony.

If her attempts at evading him were all useless, if he recognised her and insisted on the recognition, what could she do? The question was, could she deny having been in Florence? No amount of prevarication could alter that. Suppose—only imagine if she would betray her.

He might be a gentleman and keep his secret; it was certainly within the bounds of possibility he might keep her secret; but, remembering his character, she did not for one moment think he would.

He called himself a gentleman and a man of honor, but he had not scrupled to take a mean advantage of her youth and ignorance, her vanity and folly.

What a triumph it would be for him now to turn round and laugh at the lovely Lady Studleigh, and say that beautiful, admired, proud, and lofty as she was now, she had once been content to be his companion.

What if he told all this as a secret at first, and the knowledge of it spread slowly, as a social leprosy always does. What should she do? Great heavens, what should she do?

"How mad I was!" she cried to herself over and over again; "how foolish, how blind! I might have been so happy but for this!"

It was the skeleton always by her side, and despite her nerve, her courage, her strength, there were times when it almost hopelessly beat her down. Then the thought of Earle was her shield.

"If he says one word against me, and I can not kill him," she said to herself over and over again, "I will ask Earle to fight a duel with him, and he will slay him!"

But for this, how undoubtedly happy she would have been—how victorious, how triumphant! Who, looking at that most lovely face, with its calm, high-bred air, would have thought that the heart beneath was torn with thoughts of regret, despair, and even revenge that should lead to murder.

"My darling!" said the voice she loved best in her ear. "Doris, I shall be jealous of that music. I have spoken to you so often, and you have not heard me."

The eyes she raised to him had no shadow in them of the terrible thoughts that filled her mind.

"The music is so beautiful, Earle," she said, gently.

"I wonder," he said, abruptly, "who that is—a gentleman in the centre box there? He has never once taken his eyes, or rather his glass, from your face."

A cold thrill passed over her, as though a shower of ice had fallen over her—a cold, terrible chill, a shudder that she could not repress. He own quick, subtle instinct told her that it was he.

The moments he had dreaded had come—the sword had fallen at last.

He was looking at her; the next step he would be speaking to her.

Now for the Studleigh nerve, the Studleigh courage; now for the recklessness that defied fate, the boldness that was to defy fortune! A minute to collect, to control that terrible shudder, then she held up her flowers with a smile.

"You are very negligent to-night, Earle," she said; "you have not told me that you admire my bouquet."

"There is but little need, darling. I always admire you and everything belonging to you. Your flowers are like yourself—always sweetest of the sweet, fairest of the fair!"

Have men ever paused one minute before swallowing deadly poison, before drawing the trigger of a pistol, before sending a long, gleaming knife into their hearts?

Have they ever paused with one foot upon a precipice, with one hand on the stake—paused, before taking the irrevocable step, to look around and enjoy one more moment of life?

Even so she paused now; she closed her eyes with a lingering look at his face, she buried her own in the sweet fragrant flowers.

"Do you love me so very dearly?" she asked.

"My darling, when you can collect the gleaming stars of heaven, or the shining drops of the sunny sea, you will be able to understand how much I love you—not until then!"

CHAPTER LXI.

ONE moment, only one, she kept her fair face in the fragrant blossoms—one moment, to taste, perhaps for the last time, the sweet draught of love—one moment, in which to curse the folly, the bitter, black sin of her girlhood, and to moan over the impending evil.

Then she raised her face again. Surely some of the sweetness of the flowers had passed into it; it had never seemed to Earle so tender or so sweet.

"What were you saying just now, Earle, about a glass, or some one's eyes never being taken from my face? If my grammar is involved, it is your fault."

"I can not imagine who he is!" cried Earle. "We have been here nearly an hour, and he has never looked at the stage—I do not think he has heard one note of the music; he has done nothing but look at you earnestly."

"Perhaps he admires my jewels or my flowers," she said coquettishly.

"It is your face," said Earle, impatiently. "What do men care for jewels or for flowers?"

"Who is he, Earle? Where is he? Is it any one I know?"

"I should imagine it is some one you know, who is waiting for some sign of recognition from you," said Earle. "You can

not fail to see him, Doris, in the centre box on the second tier. He seems to be a tall, handsome man; he wears a white japonica. His glass is turned straight upon you."

"I can not return the compliment and look fixedly at him," she said, "but I will take one glance at him, and see if I know him."

Calmly, slowly, deliberately, yet with fire and hate of fury burning in her heart, she laid down her dainty bouquet; she took up the jeweled opera glass, held it for a moment lightly balanced on her hand, then with a calm, proud smile, raised it to her eyes.

Oh, heavens! that the first glimpse of those dark eyes, looking fire into her own, did not kill her.

Her heart gave a terrible bound; she could have cried aloud in her agony, and have died; but the Studleigh nerve was uppermost, the Studleigh courage in full play; her hands did not tremble, nor her lips quiver.

Quite calmly she looked, as though she saw a stranger for the first time, and even then a stranger who did not interest her. She laid down the glass, and turned to Earle, with a smile.

"I do not know the gentleman; I have not seen him before."

At that same moment he who had been watching her with such eager interest made a low bow.

"He appears to recognise you," said Earle; "he is bowing to you."

She did not make even the least acknowledgment in return.

"He can not know me," she said, calmly; "he is mistaken. I have never seen him before."

"He must be either very dull or foolish to mistake you, my darling, for any one else," said Earle. "I defy the whole world to show another face like yours. It is some one whom you have met and forgotten. Be kind, and give him some little acknowledgment, Doris. See, he is bowing again."

She raised her eyes to his face.

"Lady Studleigh returns no bows from strangers," she said, haughtily, and Earle felt himself rebuked.

At that moment Sir Harry Durham entered the box to pay his respects to the belle of the evening. Earle asked him eagerly if he knew the gentleman in the centre box, who wore the white japonica?

"Know him!" said Sir Harry, laughingly, "yes, of course I do—every one knows him. That is Lord Charles Vivianne."

The familiar name fell upon her ears like a death-knell. Earle repeated in surprise:

"Lord Vivianne! I have heard of him often enough, though I never saw him before. I have surely heard some romantic story about some love affair."

"Earle," interrupted Lady Doris, "do you not think Lady Linleigh looks tired?"

She merely asked the question, the first that came into her mind. She succeeded perfectly—Sir Harry went to ask the countess if she were fatigued. Earle bent over Lady Doris' chair.

"You have some strange deeds to answer for," he said, lightly.

For one moment she looked startled.

"What do you mean, Earle?" she asked.

"I believe," he replied, "that you have made a conquest of this famous Lord Vivianne."

"Heaven forbid!" she said; and she said it so earnestly that Earle looked at her in utter wonder.

"I am tired of conquests, Earle," she said, trying to smile. "I want nothing—no one but you, no love but yours."

"It is almost cruel, Doris, to make me such a beautiful speech in the presence of a crowded opera house, where it is impossible that I can thank you properly for it."

"How would you thank me properly for it, Earle?" she asked, coquettishly.

"I would count the number of letters in the words, and would give you as many kisses as there are letters."

"Kissing is not fashionable," she said; "it is very well for common people, but ladies of fashion do not indulge in such old-fashioned manners.

"Then I hope you will not be a lady of fashion much longer," said Earle.

The opera was over; Lady Studleigh looked across the house to see if her enemy was gone. No; he was still there, looking earnestly at her.

"Perhaps," she thought to herself, "he is waiting to go out when we do."

"Shall we wait for the ballet, Doris?" said the earl.

Wait! She would have waited until doomsday to have avoided him.

"Yes," she replied; "I should like to see the ballet."

Then she asked herself if she had not done a very stupid thing in trying to defer the evil day.

He would speak to her, that was evident; perhaps it would have been better over and done with. He had still to wait during the brilliant scenes of the ballet.

She sat, as it were, with her grim fate in her hands; she talked, she laughed, she played with her flowers, coquetted with her fan, she listened to love speeches from Earle, she exchanged smiling remarks with the countess, yet all the time she was perfectly conscious that he sat silent, immovable, his burning glance fixed on her face, never for one moment releasing her.

Some friend joined him, of whom he asked a question. From the quick glance given to her, she knew that it was of her they spoke—asking her name, in all probability.

What would he think when he heard it? Sure, he would say to himself that he was mistaken; the Lady Studleigh and the girl who had been so dazzled with his gold could not be the same.

She was right in her conjecture. He had asked her name, and learning it, had been bewildered. When he first saw her—first caught a glimpse of her face—his heart had given one fierce bound of triumph.

He had found her; he knew the graceful lines of the figure, the shapely neck, the sheen of the golden hair, the beautiful face. At first he thought of nothing but that he had found her.

Then doubt came to him. Could it be Doris?—this lovely, high bred lady, in the sheen of her jewels and splendor of her attire? Besides, how could Doris be in that box, evidently one of an august circle? the gentleman talking to her had a star on his breast.

It could not be Doris; yet he knew—who so well?—the graceful bend of the proud neck, even the pretty gesture of the little white hands. It must be Doris.

Who was that gentleman with the white star on his breast? Who the calm, graceful lady? Who the young man with the face of a poet? He could not solve the enigma, but he would find it out. If it were not Doris, then it was some one so much like her that he could not take his eyes from her face.

A friend joined him, no other than Colonel Clifford, who laughed to see him sitting with that intent look.

"So you are doing what you said you never would do," he said.

"What is that?" asked Lord Vivianne.

"Joining in popular devotion," was the laughing reply.

"Clifford," said Lord Vivianne, "do you know that girl—the one with diamonds in her golden hair, and white flowers in her hands?"

Colonel Clifford laughed to himself.

"Yes," he replied, "I know her. She is the Lady Studleigh, the handsome earl's only daughter, Lord Linleigh's heiress, the queen of the season, the belle, par excellence, of St. James'."

"Lady Studleigh!—that Lady Studleigh!" he repeated. "I do not believe you—I can not believe you!" he gasped.

"It is a great pity, as it is most certainly true. Do you not know the Earl of Linleigh? The other lady with them is the countess. She was the Duke of Downsbury's daughter."

"That Lady Studleigh! I can not believe it! It can not be!"

"Perhaps," said the colonel laughingly, "we should come to some surer conclusion if you would tell me whom you imagine it to be?"

Lord Vivianne looked impatiently at him.

"I did not say that I imagined her to be any one else," he replied, hastily. "So that is really the young beauty over whom just at present London is losing its head?"

"You are right. If you would like an introduction to the earl, my brother is here; he knows him well. What do you think of Lady Studleigh? Report has not exaggerated her beauty?"

"What do I think of her? I will tell you, Clifford, when I have spoken to her, not before."

"You are difficult to please if she does not please you."

"I—I can not help thinking I have seen some one like her," he said slowly. "I wonder if I am right?"

"Hardly; it is not a common type of face. You may have done so; I have not."

Colonel Clifford dearly loved gossip. If he had found Lord Vivianne in a better temper, he would have told him the romance of the earl's marriage, and how his daughter was brought up in a very different position of life to that she now occupied.

As it was, he did not tell him, feeling that his lordship lacked civility; so it happened that not until long afterward did Lord Charles hear the story that would have solved many of his doubts.

He sat and watched her, sometimes so convinced of her identity that he could have called out "Doris;" again, wondering how he could be so foolish as to imagine he had found his lost love in Lord Linleigh's daughter.

He could not take his eyes from the beautiful face. He longed to hear her speak, to see if the voice was that of Doris; he remembered its low, sweet music so well; if he could hear her speak, he would be a thousand times more sure.

He waited until he saw them leave the box, and he hastened so as to be in the dressing room with them. Standing nearer to her, he would surely be able to judge.

"Are you cold, my darling?" asked Earle, as he saw her drawing the hood of her opera cloak over her head.

"The house was warm," she replied, in a low voice.

No movement of her enemy was lost upon her. She knew that he was close to her, that the fragrance of her flowers reached him; she saw that he pushed his way even nearer, and stood where he could have touched her. He looked intently at her. Her face was shaded and softened by the crimson blood.

Once she looked around, as though curious to see who was near her; then her eyes met his—quietly, coldly, without the least light, or recognition, or shadow of fear in them.

She looked at him for one half moment, indifferently, as she glanced at every one else, then looked away again, leaving him more puzzled than ever.

CHAPTER LXII.

IT was no wonder that when she reached Hyde House again Lady Studleigh should look ill and exhausted; she had passed through a severe ordeal, and no one but herself knew what it had cost her.

"One more such victory," she said to herself, "and I should be undone."

She lay back in one of the lounging-chairs, while Earle hastened to pour some wine for her.

"You look so tired, my darling," he murmured—"so tired. I wish we were away from this great London, out in the fresh, fair country, again, Doris. Why, sweet, there are tears in your eyes!"

She looked so wistfully, so longingly at him—tears in the eyes that had always been so proud and bright. She bent her beautiful head on his breast, longing with all her heart to tell him her terrible secret, her dreadful trouble, yet not daring the least hint.

"They are tears of fatigue," she said—"real fatigue, Earle."

"I wish I were Earl of Linleigh for ten minutes," he said; "I would forbid you to go out again, though you are queen of the season and belle of St. James'."

"I should obey you," she replied, and then she bade him good night, not daring to say more, lest she should say too much.

She wanted to be alone to collect her thoughts, to look her danger in the face, to gather her forces together, and prepare to give the enemy brave battle. It was a wonderful relief to her to find herself alone.

The worst had happened—she had seen him, he had seen her; he had looked in her face, he had watched her intently, yet she felt quite sure he was not certain of her identity—he fancied that he knew her, yet could not for certain tell; so that the worst, she believed, was over.

It might be that he would talk to her, that he would try every little ruse and every possible manœuver, but what would that matter?

She would defeat him again with her calm and her nonchalance, just as she had done this time. Then he would assuredly give it up, and say no more about it—make up his mind that he had been mistaken.

So she comforted herself with vague ideas, never dreaming that each hour brought the somber face of tragedy nearer to her.

The next day was the Duchess of Eastham's ball, one of the best of the season—one to which she had looked forward as a crowning triumph.

A night's rest, a natural facility for shaking off disagreeable thoughts, a fixed reliance on her own kindly fate to make her throw off the dark cloud that oppressed her.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

IN CHINA.—In China persons bearing the same surname, although they may not be related in any way, are forbidden to marry.

NO OLD MAIDS.—There are no old maids in Japan. When a woman is not married at a certain age, the authorities choose a husband for her, whom she is compelled to marry.

BLUE WHALES.—The blue whales of the Antarctic Ocean amuse themselves by travelling in "schools" and simultaneously jumping out of the water at intervals of half a minute, so that their entire length may be seen above the sea.

PREPARED.—On some Transvaal farms where timber is scanty the Dutch farmer keeps by him, sawn up and stowed away in a corner of his house, the planks for his coffin, ready against the time when his last hour shall have come.

THE BUILDING BEE.—A revival of the old-fashioned "building bee" is reported from San Francisco, where many carpenters and house-painters have taken up the idea very successfully. When one of their number has saved enough money to buy a piece of ground and the requisite building material, the rest all turn to of a Sunday and build the house for him.

THE BLACK CAT.—The wives of many of the fishermen in Yorkshire keep a black cat in the house, in the belief that doing so assures their husbands' safety at sea. On the vessel herself, however, it would be deemed disastrous for a black cat to be carried, as it is popularly supposed to carry gales in its tail. Also, if one of these animals become unusually playful, a tempest is always considered certain to follow.

IN VIENNA.—In Vienna all bicycle-riders, before obtaining permission to ride, in the public streets, are required to pass an examination. They have to ride between boards laid on the floor without touching the sides or edges of them. At the word of command they must be able to dismount either right, left, or backward; and until the rider passes this examination satisfactorily a license to ride on the public highway is refused him.

A LINEN PAPER.—A weekly illustrated journal printed on linen, La Tela Cortada, is the latest novelty in Spain. The reader has but to send his copy to the laundress after perusal in order to have the thing transformed into a handkerchief. According to the editorial account of the virtues of the journal, "it is useful for dusting one's boots, wiping away a tear, making one's tender adieux, taking part in popular demonstrations, and preserving diplomatic documents."

THE FIRST.—During the reign of James I England's first newspaper was born, May, 1622, seeing the first issue of the Weekly News. Notwithstanding that it was ill received, its editor, Nathaniel Butter, lived by the business for eighteen years. The venture was the outgrowth of a custom among the country gentlemen to pay some writer in London for "news letters," and Mr. Butter's brave attempt was merely the printing regularly for the general public that which before had been written in a desultory manner for the private individual.

NOVEL COLLECTIONS.—The mania for collecting leads to strange accumulation. Near Pontefract lives a banker who has a museum of old doors. They are from old houses, castles or abbeys that have some historic interest. Quite lately he bid one thousand pounds in Paris for a door through which, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, Charlotte Corday, Dalton and Robespierre passed to the guillotine. One of his doors is said to have shut off Charles II. from his Roundhead pursuers, and it bears marks of a battering-ram. A collection of ancient weathercocks is also one of this gentleman's possessions.

A "YARD OF BEER."—Mr. Harper, in his history of the Dover Road, London, recalls the now little known feature at the inns of the "yard of beer." He says: "It was served in a glass vessel exactly three feet in length, with a very narrow stem, slightly lipped at the mouth, and a globular bowl at the bottom. This was filled with beer, and any one who could drink it without spilling could have his drink for nothing; but, if he spilled a drop, the penalty was to pay double. The beer would at first flow quietly and slowly; but suddenly, when the glass was tilted a little further, the air rushed up the long stem into the bowl, and splashed about half a pint of beer in your face."

HOPE.

BY S. W.

Is the night dark,
Dense shadows stretching from the forest pines,
Black as the skies, where not one faint star shines,
Sad ominous voices calling from the shore,
Wild cries that mingle with the wild sea's roar,
While spectres born of gloom and loneliness
Closer around the weary footsteps press?
Take heart, take heart! This endless-seeming night
Will be but as a dream at morning light!

Morning shall come;
It must come! Let not coward fear have place;
Set toward the starless East thy downcast face,
Though now it seems most drear and most forlorn;
From there shall spring the glad triumphant morn,
More fair because of this long midnight's gloom,
And beautiful with sun and song and bloom;
Ah, when the glorious morning dawns at last,
Thou shalt forget the saddest darkness past!

AFTER LONG YEARS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GLORY'S LOVERS," "AN ARCH-IMPOSTOR," "HUSHED UP!" "A LOVER FROM OVER THE SEA," ETC."

CHAPTER XL.

"HAVE you any deed of surrender? No? Miss Sartoris is a woman, and was helpless and friendless. She is friendless no longer. I have—I admit, without her knowledge—taken upon myself the honor of acting as her friend and adviser. And I say she has a perfect right to occupy her own house."

"Certainly!" exclaimed Mordaunt. "And my father and I are delighted that she elects to do so! We have been living here because we thought it better that the place should not be left to caretakers——"

"Silence!" said old Sapley. "All this is flummery and nonsense! What is the use of her coming here and playing the mistress, when she knows that she will have to turn out in a few weeks?"

"Why?" demanded Mr. Harling, smoothly.

"Why!" croaked old Sapley. "Why! You know well enough, Mr.—Mr. Harling! She can't pay off the mortgage, and she is bound to go!"

"Pardon me!" said Mr. Harling. "Miss Sartoris is prepared to pay off the mortgage!"

"What!" old Sapley gasped, and his eyes started. Then he laughed scornfully. "Tell that to the marines!" he said. "Pay off!" he laughed, derisively.

But Mordaunt had been watching Mr. Harling closely, and began to suspect the truth.

"It would be better to tell it to your solicitor, unless you are acting for yourself—which is unusual, isn't it, Mr. Sapley? However, I beg to give you notice that Miss Sartoris is ready to meet your claims at any moment you are prepared to establish them. There is the formal notice"—he placed a paper on the table near him—"and there is a letter from the London and Westminster Bank, stating that they will honor her check to the amount demanded, or a much larger one!" and he laid the letter beside the paper.

* * * * * *

Old Sapley darted at them. But when he had got them in his claws, he looked at them as if he had lost the power of reading.

His sallow face went livid, and his mouth opened and shut. Then he uttered a cry—a cry so full of the agony of disappointment and dismay, that Claire could almost have found it possible to pity him.

As he staggered and clutched at the table, Mordaunt went up to him, and took the letters from his hand, read them carefully, and then, addressing Mr. Harling, said—

"I understand!" His voice was scarcely audible, and his words came with a labored slowness—"I understand!"

He turned to Claire, who stood regarding Mr. Harling with blank astonishment.

"Miss Sartoris; you have won—you have beaten us!" He shrugged his shoulders, and a smile twisted his thin lips. "Well, it is the fortune of war. We were the victors when last we met; we are now the vanquished. Mr. Harling is right—you are still mistress of Court Regna, and we"—his face reddened with humiliation and rage—"we are interlopers! We will leave the house at once. Come, father!" And he laid his hand on the old man's shoulder.

Old Sapley raised his head slowly, and looked up at him with a dazed, uncomprehending stare. Then an expression of cunning self-satisfaction stole over his livid face, and he chuckled.

"Master of the Court—eh, Mordy?" he mumbled. "Mine at last—at last! This is a proud day for us, Mordy. Mordaunt Sapley, Esq., M. P. Member for West Downshire. Mordaunt Sapley, Esq., of Court Regna!"

They listened to and looked at him with a slowly-growing apprehension and horror. Did he fail to realize it, or had the disappointment driven him mad?

"What's she waiting for, Mordy?" he demanded croakingly, and pointing a shaking finger at Claire. "Why don't you tell her to go! Let her go, Mordy! She's nobody, and not fit for you! You'll marry a title now, Mordy——"

Mordaunt took the old man's arm, and almost raised him by force.

"Come away!" he said, harshly.

Claire moved forward a step or two.

"No, no!" she said, pitifully. "Let him stay——"

But Mordaunt swung round on her like a wolf driven to bay.

"What!" he said, showing his teeth, and glaring at her. "Accept your hospitality, pity! We have not sunk so low as that, Miss Sartoris! I would rather die than remain beneath this roof—now that it is yours! Reserve your pity for those that need it! We are no longer your servants—your servants!"

He laughed defiantly. "We treat with you as equals. We leave the place at once. Come, father!" And, putting his father's arm within his own, he almost dragged him from the room.

As they went out into the hall a further humiliation awaited them. Servants know everything that happens to their masters and mistresses almost as soon as they themselves.

Perhaps someone had been listening outside the door—old Sapley had spoken loud enough to be overheard, anyway, the hall was full of servants, and they stood and stared superciliously at the father and son as they came out of the drawing room.

Mordaunt glared at them.

"My father's coat and hat!" he said, fiercely. "Order a carriage! Hang you! why do you stand and stare and gape?"

"Oh! we'll be quick, Mr. Mordaunt," said the butler, stung into retaliation. "It's the first order of yours we've executed willingly. Mr. Sapley's togs, James, and look sharp!"

Mordaunt snatched them from the footman, and put them on the shaking, shrunken figure.

"Where are we going, Mordy? I don't want to go!" whimpered old Sapley.

"Hold your tongue!" snarled Mordaunt.

The servants melted away from the hall, and presently, in an incredibly short time, indeed, the carriage came up to the door, and Mordaunt almost carried his father to it. As the porter closed the door he heard a sharp cry—a wail of disappointment and despair from the old man.

The three left in the drawing-room looked at each other in silence for a moment or two; then Claire went up to Mr. Harling.

"Oh! I can't understand it—realize it all—yet!" she said, her voice trembling with emotion. "Is it true? Have you paid all this money for me? But I cannot take it! You must know that I am very, very grateful! It seems wonderful, incredible, that anyone could be so generous. But, oh, I could not take it! You must not ask me!"

Mr. Harling took both her hands and led her to a chair.

"My dear," he said, gently, as a father speaks to his daughter, "you shall tell me all this to-morrow, after you have rested and realized the change that has come over your fortunes. And let me reassure you that you will pain me very much, very much indeed, if you allow your pride to rob me of the greatest satisfaction my money has hitherto afforded me! You are too kind-hearted to do that—isn't she, Grace?"

"Yes" exclaimed Grace; "and too sensible! My dear Claire, you don't know my father yet, or you'd know that when he has made up his mind to do a thing, not all the women in the world would prevent him. Besides—father, I must say it!—he is so disgustingly rich that I suppose this money is a mere nothing——"

"Hush, hush, my dear," pleaded the old man, as if he were ashamed. "It won't quite ruin us, my dear Miss Sartoris. And, to tell you the plain truth, and to make a clean breast of it, I've done what I've done to further my own ends; and you'd better wait to learn what they are before you utter a word of gratitude! Gratitude! It's I who ought to be grateful, as you'll discover presently. And now we won't say a word more about it—to-night, at any rate. Just forget that you ever left the Court, and try and persuade yourself that we are your guests for a day or two—as we will be, if you will have us. Oh, dear! It sounds very rude, but I am tremendously hungry!"

Almost as he spoke the butler appeared.

"Dinner will be served in an hour, miss!" she said, as gravely, and in as matter-of-fact a tone as if Claire had never been absent. "Your rooms are ready, sir."

It was a strange meal, that dinner! They were almost too excited to eat; and yet the servants, by their manner, were evidently trying to carry out Mr. Harling's idea, and persuade Claire that she had never for an hour ceased to be the mistress of the Court.

That there were rejoicings in the servant's hall at the sudden change of affairs was demonstrated by the buzz of excitement which now and again rose from that locality; and at intervals the staid butler permitted his unbounded satisfaction with Claire's return to display itself in his countenance.

The three sat and talked late into the night, but Mr. Harling would not permit his coup de theatre, his beautiful little plot for the destruction of the Sapleys to be discussed.

We would talk of anything but that—and Gerald. It is scarcely necessary to say that he was carefully avoided.

At last Mr. Harling insisted upon their going to bed; but even when they went upstairs, the two girls found themselves in one room and still eager to talk.

"Oh, Claire, I don't know whether I am on my head or my heels!" said Grace, sinking at Claire's feet on the thick, fleecy rug before the fire, and leaning her arms upon Claire's knees.

"And yet it seems so perfectly right and fitting that you should be queening it here! You look the mistress of this place, vast and grand as it is! And to-morrow you are going to show me how much vaster and grander it is than even I imagine it, aren't you? Well, it makes me happy to think of it! And you, Claire, dear; I should like to know exactly how you feel?"

Claire laid her hand on the golden head.

"I am too bewildered to feel anything but gratitude——"

"You are not to speak of that!" broke in Grace, quickly. "Are you happy, quite? No!" she looked up at Claire searchingly, "not quite! Ah! I know dear!" and she sighed. "You are thinking of him!" The color rose to her face, and she looked aside. "Claire, what will you do?"

"What can I do?" murmured Claire. "Ah, what can I do?"

"You have been very wicked," said Grace. "You have wronged the noblest, truest, best of men." Her breath came fast, too fast for her words. Claire looked down at her.

"Grace!" she whispered.

Grace flushed to her white neck.

"Yes, dear!" she said, answering the question put in that one word. "Yes, it is true. I—I loved him. Wait! Listen! Do not misunderstand! I said 'loved.' I loved him with all my heart, I would have given all the world if he could have loved me, but—but I knew he could not, even before I knew that his heart was given to you, and—and—I have fought with my love for him until I have torn it out of my heart. And yet there is love for him there still—a sister's love, Claire. There is nothing I would not do for Gerald Wayre. I could die for him as he was ready to die for me—I would go to the end of the earth, just to win an hour's happiness for him! Oh, how am I to make you understand?"

Claire bent down and kissed her.

"You are more worthy of him than I am, Grace!" she said, almost with a moan. "You have never wronged him, misjudged him? While I! Oh, I ache and burn with shame when I think of the way I have treated him! No wonder that he paid me back with scorn and contempt."

"Not that, dear," said Grace, quietly.

"Yes, yes, a hundred times, yes!" said Claire, scornfully; "and it was only what I deserved. I—I could almost wish that he had struck me, the other day—I could have borne a blow better than the look in his eyes, the words which keep ringing in my ears and torturing me!"

"Would you do anything to win his forgiveness?"

"Anything!" echoed Claire, passionately. "Is there anything I would not do? Think of the extent of the wrong I did him! And—and he was poor and I was rich then! And he must have thought that I treated him—that I was proud of my money. Oh, Grace, Grace, when I think of it all, I feel as if I should go mad!"

"You are rich still; he is poor still!" whispered Grace. "Go to him, Claire."

Claire started, and the blood rose to her face with maidenly shame; then she grew pale again and a light glowed in her eyes.

"Yes! I could go to him! But I shall never see him again! I feel that! He looked it when he left me the other day!"

"You must go to him before it is too late!" said Grace, earnestly.

"Before it is too late!"

"Yes! Oh, my dear, don't you see? He is still considered guilty by some—will be considered guilty until he can prove his innocence. And he will be able to do that when that ship, The Polly, The Susan, or whatever is its ridiculous name, comes back! If you wait till then—ah, well!"

Claire held her breath.

"Oh, Grace, how I love you for thinking of that! Oh, where is he?" And she began to pace the room.

Grace got a little frightened.

"In bed, where you and I ought to be!" she said; "and you shall go now! I shall not. Oh, yes, I will, for I know what you will do; you will walk up and down like a tiger all night, Claire. I won't leave you to-night. Let me stay with you!"

And she put her arms lovingly around her. "Why, your heart is beating like a sledge-hammer, and you are shaking. Oh, dear! no wonder he loves you when you love him like this!"

* * * * * *

Gerald got down to Thraxton the next morning and walked to the cottage at Regna. Although the news of Miss Sartoris' return had passed round Regna like a flash of lightning, there was no one about to tell him, and, as he was cooking his breakfast, he was thinking of her sadly. After breakfast he would run over to the inn, and ask for tidings of Mr. Harling—for it is scarcely necessary to say that Gerald had no suspicion that Grace and Claire were in the neighborhood.

He had made his breakfast, and was toasting a piece of bread on the end of a fork, when he saw someone pass the window. It was a woman's figure, but he had not time to recognise it, and was turning the slice of bread, when there came a knock at the door.

He got up and opened it, with the toast in his hand, and almost dropped the latter in his amazement. For there stood Claire. Claire, himself!

"Can you tell me if Mr. Wayre——?" she had begun, but there she stopped, crimson and white by turns, and stood with downcast eyes, speechless.

"Claire—Miss Sartoris!" he said—gasped rather, "You—you want to see me?"

"Yes," she said, painfully catching her breath. "I—I—they told me that you had stayed here—I—I wanted to know!" Then her courage crept back to her. "Yes; I wanted to see you!"

He held the door open wider, and drew back.

"Won't you come in?" he said. How commonplace, how grotesque the familiar phrase sounded!

She walked in, and he put a chair for her, but she did not take it, and stood before him with downcast eyes, the loveliest picture he had ever gazed on.

At last she raised her eyes and looked at him, and the look made his heart leap within his bosom, and the fork shook in his hand.

"Mr. Wayre," she said, and her voice was scarcely above a whisper, and, oh, so humble, so meek. "I—I have come to ask you to forgive me!"

Gerald stared at her, and repeated the words slowly.

"To—to forgive you?"

"Yes, oh, yes! I have wronged you—cruelly! No one has ever been so—so wickedly mistrusted and cruelly wronged. I—I know it now! I know how vile and baseless was my suspicion!" She could not go on for a moment, and Gerald said, stammered—

"You have heard——?"

"I have heard nothing but what you told me!" she said eagerly, passionately. "I knew when you spoke, at the first word you uttered, that—that—that you were innocent! And I let you go thinking—thinking that I still suspected you!"

"You believe I am innocent!" he stammered. "Without proof! Thank God for that! Miss Sartoris, this makes me very happy!"

Claire's heart sank at the "Miss Sartoris."

"And—and—you forgive me!" she faltered.

"Forgive you!" he said, earnestly. "There is nothing to forgive! Rather, I ought to ask your pardon for—for behaving like a brute the other day! Yes; and I do ask your pardon, Miss Sartoris, most humbly!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" she cried—and yet in a whisper. "It is I who behaved like—like a brute!"

"No, no!" he said, eagerly. "You were right to suspect me. After all, it—it was only natural!"

"Natural?" she said, with a little pant. "It was unnatural, and—and wicked!"

"Never mind!" he said. "It is all over now! And you came to tell me this before The Susan returned! Ah, that was like you, Miss Sartoris! Thank you, thank you! I can't tell you how grateful I am! I am—almost—a happy man now! Poor Lucy! I ought to tell you that I am trying to find out what became of her. But I won't bother you with that! What can I say to show you how grateful I am to you for condescending to come to me like this! Such goodness!"

He floundered on, his face flushed, his hand pushing his hair from his forehead—in the way she loved, and he did not see—oh, how blind is poor man where woman is concerned!—that he had only to take her in his arms, without a word—just take her in his arms!

"I—I—will go now!" she said. "I—I hope that we shall be friends again—Mr. Wayre?"

So humble still! So full of pleading, the sweet voice! And yet he did not see!

"Friends! Ah, yes, if you will let me be one!" he said, gratefully. "I shall not be here long; but, while I am here, I am glad you have come back to the Court. How funny it is that you should know the Harlings! Did they tell you how we met? I am painting Miss Grace's picture; when I've finished that, and got to the bottom of poor Lucy Hawkers' case, I shall be off. You know my old life of adventure?"

"I know," she said, almost inaudibly. "I hope—you—will be happy—I will go now." She turned to the door. He followed her, and opened it.

"To come to me like this!" he murmured, almost to himself. "It is the sweetest, the noblest thing! Oh, I can't realise it!"

"Yes," said poor Claire, in a whisper; "and—and—to come for nothing!"

He looked at her—her face went almost white, then flamed. Down went the fork which he had unconsciously held all the time, and out went his hand upon her arm.

"Miss Sartoris! Claire! Stop! You—you shall not go!" For, of course, she made to fly now; a woman always wants to fly at the first intimation of pursuit. "No! you shall not. Claire, look at me! Speak to me!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GERALD'S hand tightened on Claire's arm—so much so that he almost hurt her; but she did not mind; indeed, it would have given her a subtle kind of joy to suffer pain at his hands; she had wronged him so!

"Claire," he said, and his voice was hurried and broken. "Why did you look at me like—like that! Is—oh, can it be possible that——Claire, forgive me, I must be mad! I must be deceiving myself as I did—before!"

She did not offer to withdraw her arm, but stood, her heart beating wildly, her eyes downcast.

But suddenly she lifted them and looked at him again, and again her look—half-pleading, half-tender—and, ah! so wistful!—shot through him "like a warm dart," as Owen Meredith says.

"Claire," he said, after he had caught his breath, "I love you! I can't help it! I must tell you! I have tried to forget you, to harden my heart against you, but it is of no use. I love you, and I shall always love you till I die. I told you all this before, and—and you gave me your answer; but I tell it you again, for the last time."

She turned her face to him pityingly, wistfully.

"Not—the last time—Gerald!" she whispered, in a low voice that thrilled through him. "You must tell it to me again and again, because—because I shall never be tired of hearing it!"

It was almost too much for him, the suddenness of his joy, the infinite witchery of the tender smile that stole over her lovely face.

"Claire! Oh, my love, my love!" he breathed, and he caught her in his arms and pressed her to him, so that, indeed, she could scarcely whisper his name.

"Tell me once more, once more, dearest!" he said. "I—I can scarcely believe it. Just say, 'Gerald, I love you.'"

"Gerald, I love you!"

"'And I will be your wife!'"

She hid her face on his breast. "And I will be your wife!"

"Claire!" After a pause, after he had kissed her lips, her hair, "this isn't—isn't—what do you call it—reparation? Ah, no, I know you wouldn't deceive me! You love me dearest, really and truly! Good heavens, it seems so wonderful; why should you?"

"Because—you are Gerald! That is all!" she murmured. "Gerald—let me hide my face for shame; don't—don't look at me just yet. There, turn your face away, dearest." She put her hands to his face caressingly, and averted it.

"I—I—Oh, how can I say it!—I came to tell you! I came to ask you—to ask you to take me! I could not have gone away; I could not! I should have fallen at your feet and prayed you to have pity on me!"

"Claire!" he gasped.

"Yes! Think, dearest! I had wronged you so cruelly, and I loved you all the time! And my pride and jealousy had nearly wrecked my life, and there was no pride left in me, and no—no—ah, no self-respect!

"Gerald, shall I kneel to you now? Shall I? Shall I say what I meant to say, if you had not—not guessed and asked me? I should have clung to you and cried, Gerald, I love you—I have wronged you. I have been a poor, miserable little fool, with my pride and my suspicion. But I loved you all the time! Have pity on me! Take me for your wife. You shall do what you like with me, bully me—beat me—anything! Only let me live with you and try and show you what a woman's love means!"

She was sobbing now, half-hysterically; and he, half frightened, and trembling almost as much as she, soothed her with a lover's whispered words, the lover's touch.

"Hush, hush, dearest! These are not words for you—for you, my queen—it is I who should kneel." He sank on his knees and drew her hands to his face. She stooped and raised him.

"No, no! Here, on my heart, Gerald!" she panted.

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"And you haven't had your breakfast!" she exclaimed, a moment or two after.

"Breakfast! No, not yet. Have you?"

She shook her head, and tried to smooth the hair his caresses had ruffled.

"No, I came out—the house seemed stifling, and I was restless—to inquire after you."

"Have some with me!" he said joyously.

"Shall I?" she said, wistfully, shyly.

"Why not?" he responded. "See, I'll make some more tea—it's got cold."

"And I'll do the toast; let me, Gerald!"

"There's some eggs somewhere!" he exclaimed, rushing about, laughing without knowing it. "Where's the butter? Am I awake or dreaming? Stand still a moment and let me look at you!"

She drew herself up and let his eyes wander over her.

"Yes, it is you!" he said, with a long breath. "Now, don't come near me, or—or we shall never get any breakfast. There's the bread—and—oh, here are the eggs. I remember! Oh, yes, after all I must be dreaming, don't you know! I shall wake up presently and find that you have gone, and that I am still hungering and aching for you!"

"I'd better give you something more substantial to eat, and quickly," she said with a laugh. And the laugh was like sweet, wholesome music in the little room.

They got breakfast—after several interruptions and interludes—and both discovered that they were hungry. It was scarcely proper, perhaps, for these two to be seated opposite each other—like man and wife. But they had no thought, and very little care, for the proprieties at that moment.

He had got his love, his life's angel at last, and all the rest didn't matter. And she: well, if all the world cried shame, she would not have cared. He was hers, hers, her very own; and nothing should come between them again.

They talked after awhile, and Claire told him of the Sapleys' nice little plot, and Mr. Harling's goodness. Gerald was amazed, but understood in a moment.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "The villains! Well, I might have suspected it! And that dear old fellow! But—but Claire;" his brows knitted perplexedly. "Can you—can you accept?"

Claire leant her head on her hand. "All night I have been asking myself that question," she said. "It was hard to answer. At one moment I felt that I could not, at another that perhaps I ought, that I could, perhaps, take it as a loan. But now I haven't to decide, thank Heaven!"

"You haven't! Why not?" he asked.

She blushed and lowered her eyes, then raised them and looked at him with a woman's complete surrender.

"Because there is someone else who decides everything—everything—for me now and I leave it to him. It is delightful!"

Interruption and interlude.

* * * * * *

"Well, I don't know what to say. For one thing, of course, I should be glad if you hadn't a penny in the world, because then I should have to work for you. Think of it, dearest! But that's selfish, I know."

"You couldn't be selfish, if you tried," she remarked, with solemn decision.

"Oh, couldn't I!" he retorted. "You wait and see! Well, we'll talk it over with him. They are the nicest, most warm hearted, people in all the world. I am fond of him as if he were my father, and of Grace as if she were——"

He caught a sudden expression in her face.

"What's the matter now?" he asked.

"Say, 'sister,' Gerald!" she said.

"I was going to say sister," he said innocently.

She nodded.

"I don't mind you loving her as a sister," she said, very quietly.

"Why, of course not!" he exclaimed. "You like her too, don't you?"

"Yes—like a sister also," she said. "Gerald, you—you must come up to the Court and tell them."

"After breakfast," he nodded. "Some more tea, please!"

Then suddenly, in the midst of their wonderful happiness, Claire remembered where they were. She put her cup down and looked at him, pitifully.

"Oh, Gerald! That poor girl—Lucy!"

His face grew grave. "Yes," he said. "I've got to carry that business through. You must help me, dearest!"

"It seems so heartless to be so—so happy in this house!" she said, in a low voice.

He got up and comforted her, of course.

"We are doing her no wrong, dearest," he said. "Our joy cannot injure or insult her. But, come, we will go at once. Let me put your hat on for you. Which is the right side, or doesn't it matter? There! Oh! Claire, how lovely you are! Would to God I were more worthy of you!"

"Don't say that, Gerald," she almost implored. "Never say that again. It—it makes me think of the way I have treated you, and—and that hurts me!" and she clung to him with a little shudder.

They went out and walked demurely enough up the street, for the Regna folk were about and eager to welcome her, but when they got into the lonely lanes, their hands stole together and clasped, and they went along like two children sweethearting.

Mr. Harling and Grace were on the steps looking for them, and Grace turned rather pale for a moment as she saw them coming along together; but it was only for a moment, and it was her last time of showing any emotion at sight of Gerald.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Mr. Harling. "Grace declared that you had bolted back to London and to the school; but I knew you were too sensible to do that. How are you, lad?" and he wrung Gerald's hand. "You have found each other, then, eh?" he asked, looking at them shrewdly.

"Yes," said Gerald, drawing Claire's arm within his. "I have found her never to lose her again, I hope."

"That's all right, then," cried the old gentleman, chuckling and rubbing his hands. "Come into breakfast."

"We've—we've had our breakfast!" faltered poor Claire, going rosy-red.

Mr. Harling laughed with keen enjoyment.

"Of course, you have! Nice behavior of one's hostess, I must say! To run away, and leave her guests to breakfast by themselves!"

"No, you are the host here," said Claire, in a low voice.

"Don't you make such a ridiculous mistake, my dear young lady!" he retorted. "Court Regna is yours, and no one else's. I hope Gerald has persuaded you to look at the matter in a sensible way. I'm not so sure that you are so much indebted to me as you think.

"My lawyer has got to examine the Sapleys' claims, and I shouldn't be at all surprised when he does so, if he finds that roguery has been at work, and that a good slice will have to be deducted.

"That will leave you something of an income, and the estate, properly managed, will clear itself in time. That is, of course, if you insist upon repaying me. But I'm not so sure that you will—presently."

He nodded and smiled rather mysteriously. "But, don't let us worry about money on such a day as this! Let us be happy——"

"We certainly shan't, if we talk about money," interrupted Grace, who, with her arm round Claire's waist, was going round the hall, looking at the portraits and curios.

"No. I propose—if I may venture to do so—that Miss Sartoris takes us all for a drive, and shows us, something at least, of her 'kingdom by the sea.'"

"The dog cart; and you shall drive, Claire is a splendid whip, sir," said Gerald.

Claire blushed and laughed.

"Very well," she said. "We will take a holiday to day; but to-morrow I—I must go back to London. I mustn't run away from them without a word, must I? Miss Gover—oh! you don't know how kind she has been to me! And Sister Agnes—I must go and tell her—everything!"

"Sister Agnes!" echoed Gerald, with astonishment. "Do you know her?"

"I live with her—did live with her. "She has been—ah! I cannot tell you what she has been to me! No mother could have been more loving—more——" Her eyes filled with tears.

Gerald stared at her.

"Why—Sister Agnes! A white-haired lady, with sad-looking eyes? But, of course, it must be the same! Why, I know her! I met her—oh! I must tell you all about it!"

He did so, leaning over the back of the dog-cart, as Claire drove them through the familiar lanes, and across the downs, from whence they could look down on the sea stretching away to Labrador.

"I don't wonder at your loving her!" he said in a low voice. "I can't tell you the impression she made on me. I can't explain it to myself. It was as if—oh! I can't explain! Claire, dearest, do you think she would——"

"I know what you are going to say," she murmured. "I think I know your thoughts before you utter them, dear! You think she might come down here!"

"Yes! How would it be if I ran up to town, and persuaded her to come back with me!"

"You might," said Claire; "if you told her I wanted her very much."

"I'll try it," he said. "I'll go up to-morrow. And I'll go and see that Miss Gover. Fancy your teaching in a school, Claire! Doesn't it sound like a dream!"

"And you must make her promise to come down in the holidays. "Oh, Gerald!" And she swung round with an eager flush on her face, "if we could get her down here—to the school, you know! The mistress has talked of retiring for ever so long! Miss Gover would be so happy in the country, and—ah! it would be so delightful to have her near us!"

They made a long drive of it, and Mr. Harling was duly impressed by the extent and wealth of the estate.

"Yes," he said to Claire, rubbing his chin, "you ought to be able to repay me—if you want to!"

After lunch, Mr. Harling and Grace disappeared, and Gerald and Claire went out alone. As if they were drawn there by a common impulse, they went to the chapel, and stood beside the tomb, looking down at it, hand-in-hand, with love hovering over them.

"Do you remember?" he whispered—as if she had forgotten! "I fell in love with you that first morning, Claire! Do you remember the sketch?"

"Yes," she said; "where is it? Oh! I hope you have kept it, Gerald!"

"Yes; here it is," he said. And he drew the pencil portrait from his pocket and gave it her.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CALF'S LIVER.—Have water, with a little salt, on the fire, and at the first boiling throw in the slices of liver for five minutes, and then drain them. Put two ounces of butter in a frying-pan, and set it on a sharp fire. When melted add a teaspoonful of chopped parsley and green onions, and then the liver. Sprinkle on a saltspoonful of flour, then half a wineglass of warm broth, the same of claret, salt, pepper, and a pinch of allspice. Serve when finished. It takes only ten or twelve minutes for the whole process.

AFTER SUNSET.

BY T. B. D.

O tranquil hour! Not silent as the midnight;
But fraught with soothing sounds that lull to rest!
When God's hand draws the afterglow's rich curtain
Athwart the west.

The prattling brook, the hum of village gossip
The tuneful vesper of the missel thrush,
The homing rook—all own the soft enchantment
Of twilight hush.

The bare elm-tops stand quiet as the steeple
Their tender tracery clear against the blue;
The primrose on the greensward drinks serenely
Deep draughts of dew.

O quiet hour! O restful scene! O maiden
In tranquil silence sitting by my side!
No sweeter peace than this that calms my spirit
At eventide!

Winning a Wife.

BY G. L. D.

FIVE o'clock tea was in full swing at Lushington Court. Women in delicate-hued tea-gowns and severe tailor-built frocks, and men in pink were scattered in little groups about the fine old hall, which, with its blazing yule log and cosy old-fashioned window-seats, formed an ideal spot for this most social meal of the day. It was a place that was lived in. Riding whips, cigarette cases, newspapers, driving gloves, work-baskets, and French novels, littered the oak tables. A long sable boa had been hung by an irreverent hand on the head of a mail-clad figure; an enormous St. Bernard lay stretched at its ease on the tiger-skin rug before the open fireplace; and the perfume of violets from San Remo mingled with the more material fragrance of tea and buttered toast.

It was the twenty-fourth of December, and a congenial party of guests had assembled together to spend their Christmas together under Sir Guy Lushington's hospitable roof.

The condiments in the social salad were well mixed, which is not invariably the case on these festive occasions, and one and all were in some measure possessed of the qualification which society in this century demands from her devotees. Well-dressed, well-bred, some good looking, others amusing; and the majority well supplied with the three-penny bits of conversation, if somewhat lacking in the solid gold pieces.

"Does anyone know what the new man is like?" demanded a pretty little woman in a French-looking tea-gown, as she took her cup from Charlie Lushington.

"Yes," drawled the languid fair-haired wife of a popular dramatist. "It is as well to be acquainted with the map of the county. One might find oneself involved in awkward situations."

"As Rose Trevor was the other day when she inquired so tenderly for Lord Blackmore's wife," put in the first speaker with an irresistible little laugh.

"This fellow has not got a wife, at any rate. I can tell you that much," remarked Charlie Lushington from his position at the back of Mrs. Gwyn's chair. "He is some sort of connection or distant cousin to ours too," he added; "but I don't know where the relationship comes in exactly."

"In that case, he is above suspicion," said Mrs. Stapleton, the dramatist's wife, demurely. "Is he good-looking, Charlie?" she inquired with a faint show of interest.

Charlie reflected.

"It is so difficult to know what women call good-looking. There is plenty of him, in height at least, and—well, he is rather fairish and—I don't know what color his eyes are."

"You need not say another word," exclaimed Mrs. Gwyn mischievously. "Your description leaves nothing to be desired. I see him before me."

"He is a cousin of mine too, then," said a voice from the other end of the hall, and a girl in a trim gown of blue serge, a mass of golden brown hair, laughing hazel eyes, and a Dresden-china complexion, joined the circle round the fire.

"'A cousin's a different thing,'" quoted Mrs. Stapleton. "Something tells me, Rose—we all have our inspired moments you know—that this young man, so graphically described by Charlie, will prove to be your fate."

"Rubbish," remarked Miss Trevor with more brevity than politeness. "I love my liberty too well to relinquish it to anyone," with a little toss of her dainty head.

"It is marriage that bestows liberty," murmured Mrs. Gwyn from behind the peacock feather fan she was using as a screen. "It has its compensations, my dear, I assure you."

"It should," replied Rose emphatically, "to atone for its numerous drawbacks."

There was a general laugh.

"Ah, Rose," said Lady Lushington, patting her young cousin on the shoulder, "you will tell a different story some day, and Ralph Dalston would be a very good master to teach you your lesson."

"Talk of an angel," murmured Charlie as the sound of carriage-wheels were heard coming up the drive. "Here he is."

"Well, I shall go," remarked Rose, with determination, rising from her place on the rug, where she had ensconced herself beside the woolly St. Bernard. "I do not feel as if I could be civil to the man." And she made her escape hastily by one door, as the new-comer entered by the other.

Many were the approving glances cast upon Captain Dalston as he stood chatting with his hostess, the firelight flickering on his tall soldierly figure and fair handsome face. There was that look of strength and determination about the well-cut features, which invariably attracts the gentler sex, and a cynical light shone in the keen gray eyes, which yet could look soft enough when they chose.

Ralph Dalston was somewhat of a phenomenon in this age of butterfly loves and ever-changing fancies. He had reached the age of thirty-four without having once experienced the pangs of the tender passion, and never, either in England or India, had he come across a woman whom he would care to instal as mistress of his ivy-covered Grange in the smiling Derbyshire valley.

"You are not afraid of ghosts by chance?" asked Lady Lushington as she handed a cup of tea to the thirsty traveller.

Captain Dalston laughed lightly.

"I shall be awfully grateful to you if you give me a chance of seeing one. Have you such a thing on the premises?"

"There are two," eagerly interposed Miss Gwyn, anxious for a share of the new-comer's attention, and feeling her charms somewhat overlooked. "One, I am told, carries his head about with him, and the other is a charming young woman in a Watteau costume, who haunts the west corridor, and who can only be seen by Lushingtons, or at least some relation of the family."

Ralph bestowed a careless glance at the pretty animated face of the speaker, and turned to his hostess.

"With your permission," he said, "I will try my luck with the feminine spectre, as I can claim a distant relationship through my mother. The headless gentleman might prove too much for my nerves."

"Very well, we will put you in the west corridor," she replied with a laugh. "And now, good people, it is high time to adorn ourselves for the great function of the day." And there was a general exit of rustling skirts.

"Where is Rose?" inquired her cousin an hour later, as she marshalled her guests into the dining-room.

"She has a headache, mother," answered Ada Lushington, a saucy-looking brunette, "and is not coming down to night."

"A headache!" exclaimed Lady Lushington in surprise. "Why, she was as lively as a cricket at tea-time."

Mrs. Stapleton and Mrs. Gwyn exchanged glances of amusement.

"The monkey has one of her wicked plans on," whispered the latter. "I shan't be sorry if she does play off any of her tricks on the new man. He has far too much 'side' for my taste."

Which speech, freely translated, meant that she had failed to make an impression, and was quite aware of the unpleasant fact.

The evening passed merrily enough with the aid of music, small talk, billiards and flirtation, and it was long past midnight before Captain Dalston left the smoking-room and turned his steps in the direction of the haunted corridor.

"Keep your weather eye open, old fellow," observed Charlie, as he bade him good night. "You are safe to see her. She has never failed to come to one of the family—so they all say, at least—I have never tried my luck, but then there is no ambition about me!"

"Of course it is all foolery," reflected Ralph Dalston, as not feeling inclined for bed, he threw himself into a cosy arm-chair by the cheerful fire. "But I confess I should like to find out if there really is any thing to be seen. Nothing like adding to one's experience."

The large clock on the stairs, a veritable grandfather's clock, chimed three, and with a yawn Ralph rose from his chair and prepared to turn in. "I will just take a look outside first," he said. "She may be on her way, and it would be awkward to receive a lady en deshabille."

So saying, he opened the door noiselessly and peered down the gloomy corridor, lit only by a faint flickering lamp at the far end. What was that? It sounded like the rustling of a silken skirt. Although, perhaps, the most unsuperstitious man in his battery, Captain Dalston experienced a vague feeling of alarm, a sort of sensation which the Scotch describe as "uncanny," as he listened to what was undoubtedly an approaching footstep.

Pitter-patter went the little high heels, and a charming figure, dressed in a Watteau costume, came slowly towards his room. The powdered hair fell in clustering curls upon a white forehead, the gaily tinted brocade, made after the fashion of a bygone century, suited the wearer to perfection, and the face was the most bewitching, or so it seemed to him, that he had ever gazed upon. The portraits of old dead-and-gone Lushingtons seemed to smile from their frames, as this dainty member of their family tripped lightly by, with a far-away look in her dark eyes, and one white hand uplifted as if in warning.

Ralph stood transfixed. His heart beating at a most unusual rate, half with fear, half with a feeling which he could not analyze.

Nearer and nearer the fair apparition approached, and then, just as he had summoned up courage to walk boldly up to it, it disappeared, through a door he had not before perceived, with a long drawn sigh.

Once it had vanished he felt himself again, and proceeded to follow through the door by which the unearthly visitant had taken her departure. It opened into a large bare room, to his surprise, he discovered to be as empty as the cupboard of nursery fame. And what staggered him completely, was the fact that there was no other visible means of exit. Could the ghost have escaped by the high window? "I could swear she came in here," he muttered. "Where the deuce can she have gone to?" She had gone, however, and had left no sign, so with a laugh at his own bewilderment he returned to his room.

"If I could only find a woman with a face like that!" reflected the unsusceptible Captain as he prepared for bed. "By Jove, I should be tempted to forego my theories about matrimony; but they don't make 'em like that in this century, more's the pity. Well, I shall keep my own counsel anyhow, the other fellows would chaff one so. And of course it was all my fancy, and—Lushington's champagne." And with that, he finally got into bed, where the face of the lovely Watteau lady still haunted him in his troubled dreams.

* * * * * *

There was certainly no sign of a headache or any other malady about Rose Trevor when she made her rather late appearance in the breakfast-room on Christmas morning.

"Where is the new man?" she whispered to Charlie as she took her place beside him.

"Hasn't shown up yet," replied her cousin abstractedly, being occupied in attending to Mrs. Gwyn's wants. "I expect the ghost was too much for him."

"What fun!" laughed Rose. "I hope she gave him a good fright. I cannot endure that kind of man."

"What do you know about him?" demanded Charlie's neighbor curiously.

"Oh, I have heard a good deal about him from the Ratcliffes—Percy is in his battery, don't you know, and he often stays with them. Blanche and Annie say he is frightfully conceited, thinks no end of himself and his V. C., and gives out that 'only married women have any sense'—he will not trouble to talk to girls."

Mrs. Gwyn looked dubious and pursed up her rosy lips.

"He did not give me that impression," she said slowly. "But I dare say he fancies himself. I never met a gunner yet who did not," she ended with a little laugh.

"Well, anyhow, I shall give him a wide berth," declared Rose. "It will be a new sensation to his lordship to find one woman who does not run after him."

"That is a favorite dodge with you girls," remarked Charlie loftily, with all the wisdom befitting his twenty-one years. "You think if you run one way, the man will run after you, but it doesn't always pay."

"Give me some toast, Charlie, and don't talk about what you do not understand," said Rose, with a mischievous laugh in her wicked hazel eyes.

Breakfast was half over when Captain Dalston at last entered the room, with many apologies to his host and hostess.

He was immediately greeted by a storm of inquiries concerning his nocturnal experiences, which he received, and evaded, in his usual nonchalant manner.

"What a shame it was of you, Lushington," he said lightly and carelessly, "to raise my hopes on the subject of the fair Watteau dame for nothing."

"He has seen something, for all that," reflected Mrs. Stapleton, who had been watching him curiously ever since his entrance. "And I will get it out of him, too, before I am many hours older."

With which object in view she made herself especially agreeable, as she so well knew how; and being well versed in masculine nature, looked after his creature comforts, and attracted his attention to the most appetizing dishes on the well-spread table.

"I have another cousin to introduce you to," said Lady Lushington, as she rose to leave the room; "you did not meet last night. Rose, my dear, Captain Dalston—Miss Trevor."

Rose gave him a frigid little bow and smile, but Ralph, with complete forgetfulness of his usual perfect manners, stared at her in silence as though unable to speak.

"Gracious, he is struck," thought Mrs. Gwyn. "What on earth do all the men see in that little thing?"

"I do not think I can claim Captain Dalston for a cousin, Fanny," said Rose, in a voice which she seemed to have borrowed for the occasion from a refrigerator. "The relationship, if it exists at all, is so very distant."

With an effort Ralph recovered his powers of speech.

"It is too bad of you to repudiate me in that heartless way, Miss Trevor. I think we shall be able to trace a connection between us at any rate."

"I am not at all good at that kind of thing," she answered, making her way towards the door. "Is it not time we got ready for church, Fanny?" and taking the elder lady's arm she left the room.

Captain Dalston stood still for a moment staring after her retreating figure, and then rousing himself, went out into the shrubberies to steady his nerves with the aid of a cigar.

"Most extraordinary likeness I ever saw," he muttered to himself. "Only wants her hair powdered, and that blue and pink arrangement on, to be the living image of my ghost.

"If I had seen this girl last night, I should have imagined that her face had bewitched me into fancying I saw it again, but I never set eyes on her before. Well, I'll be shot if I can make it out."

Here one or two of the men interrupted his solitary meditations, and he tried to banish the remembrance of Rose Trevor's lovely face by a visit to the stables, and an animated discussion on equine beauties.

Christmas day was kept at Lushington Court in the real old fashioned style, which, like so many other ancient customs, is rapidly dying out.

The house was decorated with holly and mistletoe; the guests played forfeits with the children, and burnt their fingers at snap dragon; and a huge sirloin, turkey, and indigestible plum-puddings and mince pies, usurped the place of the French cook's usual piquant pâts and ethereal confections.

Much to Rose Trevor's disgust, Captain Dalston had been told off to take her into dinner, but true to her resolutions, she devoted the lion's share of her conversation to the man upon her other side, leaving her partner to console himself with Mrs. Stapleton.

"Do you admire Miss Trevor?" asked Mrs. Stapleton's soft murmuring tones in his ear, as she discovered him gazing intently at the girl's profile.

"Oh, she is a pretty girl, I suppose," he answered carelessly. "Not my style at all; too much color; don't you think so?" with a glance at the speaker's pale face, and straw-tinted hair. "But I cannot help looking at her. She reminds me so tremendously of someone——"

"Indeed!" said the lady briskly, thinking she was on the verge of a discovery. "I have always been given to understand," she added archly, "that Captain Dalston was invulnerable where our sex are concerned."

"Well," he replied coolly, "what have I done to make you infer the contrary? I did not say I admired the person of whom Miss Trevor reminds me."

But here, to Mrs. Stapleton's annoyance,

and a little to Ralph's relief, the signal for departure was given, and the former was forced to retire with her thirst for knowledge still unappeased.

Later on in the evening, when the children's games had come to a noisy conclusion, some of the guests wandered into the picture-gallery, where cosy velvet-covered seats placed at discreet intervals, invited conversation, and what the French call "the solitude of two."

"Show Captain Dalston your portrait, Rose," said Lady Lushington, faithful to her match-making instincts; and having no plausible excuse ready, Miss Trevor, with visible reluctance, prepared to obey.

"I am afraid it is a great bore to you," remarked her companion with unexpected and marvellous humility, as they turned into the long gallery.

"Not at all," replied Rose, with an expression on her face which rather belied her polite words. "This is the portrait Fanny means," she continued, pausing before a frame, where a beautiful woman, in a Watteau costume, smiled from the bygone centuries. "She has a ridiculous idea that it is like me. She is an ancestress of mine, so there may be a faint resemblance, but that is all."

Captain Dalston stood like one entranced before the picture, recognizing with amazement the startling resemblance, not only to the girl by his side, but also to the apparition he had seen the previous night.

"I beg your pardon—what did you say?" inquired Rose.

"Did I speak?" he stammered; "I did not mean to. But it is the most extraordinary likeness."

"Really?" she answered with a little shrug of her graceful shoulders, "I suppose you think is the correct thing to say so, but pray do not imagine you are paying me a compliment, for I think the lady has the most affected expression I ever saw."

"Affected," he exclaimed indignantly, "it is the most perfect face." And then he paused abruptly, remembering she was without the key to his bewilderment.

"But it is not only you it reminds me of," he continued rather lamely, "I could swear I had seen the original."

"Tell me where," she murmured, losing her manner of stiff repose as if by magic, and turning to him with a look of dangerous softness and entreaty in her lovely eyes. "Do tell me. This is the first favor I have asked of my cousin!"

Even Achilles had his vulnerable point, and the cool, self-possessed Captain Dalston, losing his head at this sudden transformation of the ice maiden, answered as one in a dream—"I saw her in the west corridor."

For three consecutive nights, Ralph Dalston waited up till past three o'clock, on the chance of another glimpse of his ghostly enchantress, but saw no sign of her; and although he would hardly admit it to himself, great was his disappointment at her non-appearance.

By this time, Rose Trevor and the Watteau lady were getting rather confused together in his mind; and we, as his biographer, must own that this formerly hard-hearted young man was in some danger of losing that reputation.

He did not know it. Men, as well as women, have a wonderful knack of blinding themselves to what lookers-on consider self evident truths; and during the days which followed, he attributed his feelings of pleasure in Rose's society, and the admiration her beauty and piquant ways excited in his breast, solely to his memories of the charming apparition.

It was noticed and commented upon by all the house party during the course of the next fortnight or so, that Rose Trevor had somewhat abandoned her cold-water tactics with regard to Captain Dalston, and that the two were constantly together.

The fact was, that strongly as she fought against the feeling, Ralph Dalston's good looks, fascinating manner, and the brave manly character which she had discovered underneath his languid exterior, were beginning to influence the girl in a way she had never experienced before, and now and then she found herself wishing cordially that she had not so publicly proclaimed her antagonism to him.

Matters were in this transitory state when a new diversion was proposed one day by Mrs. Stapleton.

"Let us get up some tableaux," she suggested, one snowy afternoon, when all the women, and three or four of the men, were congregated in the hall, anxiously awaiting the arrival of tea.

"The very thing," exclaimed Rose delightedly. "You have no idea, Laura, how well I look in powder!"

"I can quite imagine it," remarked Captain Dalston in a low voice. The girl colored as she met the ardent gaze of the gray eyes.

"How quietly you came in," she said pettishly. "I hate people who walk like ghosts."

"Oh, by the way, Dalston," asked a fox-hunting squire who had come over to dine and sleep, "has the Watteau lady appeared to you yet? You are some relation, are you not, and so you are entitled to see her?"

Captain Dalston laughed uneasily.

"Oh, of course we are quite intimate by this time," he said.

"When did you see her last?" inquired Mrs. Stapleton looking up at him from the depths of her lounging chair.

"I have never told you I have seen her at all," he answered lightly.

"No; but I think you have," she said significantly. "Ah, here is tea at last! What a blessing! Bring me a cup, Captain Dalston; I am pining for it."

When he had obeyed her commands, and further supplied her with hot tea-cake, she still detained him beside her with a few remarks on different subjects; and presently he followed her to a distant window seat, where they entered into a long, and apparently interesting conversation.

After one careless glance in their direction, Rose accepted tea and attentions from a devoted admirer who was staying in the house, and bestowed a charmingly indifferent smile upon her recreant knight, when he returned to his allegiance just before the dressing-bell rang.

"Come to my room, Rose," whispered Mrs. Stapleton, as she passed beside the girl on her way upstairs. "I have a lovely idea for the tableaux." So the two went off together, Rose emerging from her friend's room ten minutes later with a slightly heightened color, and a look of pleasurable anticipation in her eyes.

All preliminaries and costumes had been arranged, and the night of the tableaux had arrived. Mrs. Stapleton's idea had assumed vast proportions, and half the county had been invited to see the Lushingtons and their friends in picturesque attire softened by lime-light, and remain afterwards to dance and sup.

Much conjecture was rife concerning pretty Miss Trevor's role in the performance; that young lady having elected to keep her costume a profound secret, and rehearse in private, with Laura Stapleton as her sole audience. Dinner was an hour earlier that night, and considerably hurried over, to admit of prolonged adornment on the part of both men and women, many of the former, though professing to ridicule the whole affair, being secretly elated at the idea of appearing in colored velvets and silken hose.

It was just nine, when Captain Dalston emerged from his room, looking an ideal cavalier of the time of Charles I., in his plumed hat and flowing curls.

As he closed the door behind him he heard the rustling of silken skirts approaching from the other end of the corridor, and thinking it was one of the actresses, waited until she should pass by. Was he dreaming?

There, coming towards him, was the identical figure he had seen the night of his arrival. The pink and blue shimmering brocade, the tiny high-heeled shoes, the powdered curls, the delicately pencilled eye-brows, and the dreamy eyes.

He held his breath and waited, his heart beating like a sledge-hammer, as it had never done under the fire of the enemy. "By Jove, she shall not escape me this time," he muttered.

Quick as thought the moment she disappeared as before he darted off in pursuit, and caught her by one of the floating ribbons of her dress, as she was in the act of vanishing through a sliding panel, whose existence he now perceived for the first time.

"For Heaven's sake be careful," said the ghost, in very earthly accents; "you will tear my frock."

"Miss Trevor! You?" he exclaimed as Rose's laughing eyes glanced roguishly up at him.

"Of course it is I. How stupid you have been not to guess it sooner."

"I must have been mad," he admitted candidly. "The likeness was what staggered me the first moment I saw you, but even that night in the picture gallery I did not take in that you were the Watteau lady."

"Oh, it has been such fun!" she said delightedly. "Laura found me out; she said she was sure you had seen something, and after she had got it all out of you, she suggested that I should personate the ghost of the west corridor in the tableaux, to see what effect it would have on you."

"Shall I tell you what effect it has had?" he asked in a low voice, gazing intently at the lovely vision of flesh and blood before him.

"No, no!" she said hastily, preparing for flight, warned by the look in his eyes. "Wait till you see me in the limelight!"

"I will not wait," he replied with determination, putting his back against the door, "and you shall hear me now. Rose, my darling, I swear to you that until I saw the Watteau ghost on Christmas Eve, I had never given a thought or a sigh to any woman, and my one regret then was that she, as I imagined, was only a spirit. Now I have found the original, and I mean her to be my wife. Rose, what do you say?"

"What extraordinary times and places you do choose for your remarks," she said, the color coming and going on her downcast face. "I shall be awfully late, so let me go."

"Not till you answer me, if we wait here till midnight. Yes or no, Rose?"

"Well, yes, I suppose, if you will have it so; but I shall lead you a fearful life." And as he moved from the door to clasp her in his arms she evaded him by a skilful movement and ran swiftly down the stairs.

Perhaps the greatest success of the tableaux that evening was Rose Trevor as the "Ghost of Lushington Court," with the light of a new happiness shining in her expressive eyes.

The health of Ralph and his fair fiancee was drunk in foaming champagne after the guests from a distance had departed; and in his newly-found complacency Captain Dalston told the story of his recent occult experiences to an amused and appreciative audience, Mrs. Stapleton enjoying the satisfaction, so dear to the female heart, of seeing her prophecy of Christmas Eve fulfilled.

* * * * * *

Rose Dalston's sunny hair is beginning to be thickly powdered with silver, but the laughing eyes are as bright as ever, as she tells her children how she "frightened father a long time ago!" And, across the "walnuts and the wine," the gray-haired Colonel still regales his special chums with the tale of how he won his "Ghostly Wife."

The Top Hat.—The top hat, like most other things, was not evolved in a sudden moment of inspiration. It is the product of many centuries' follies and fashions, and unless we are much mistaken, will for some time outlive the vituperation of those who wear them.

Even so far back as the twelfth century, the beaver was worn by the "nobles of the lande mett at Clarendon."

Felt hats were known long before that, for to St. Clement we are indebted for their discovery, a debt which is annually recognized in festivals still held in his honor on November 23.

The "topper" is probably traceable not to his agency, but to the subsequent dealings with the beavers of the time of the Charleses.

The Puritans of the reign of Charles I. adopted lofty steeple crowns, typical perhaps of their soaring aspirations. With these crowns they combined brims of portentous widths, which their best friends could scarcely now contend were typical in their breadth of view.

The cavaliers, on the other hand, by rejecting the steeple crown, symbolized their less lofty principles, and by their yet broader brims adorned with feathers typified more wide and worldly sympathies.

So matters ran on until the next step in their revolution was taken in the reign of Charles II. Brims grew broader and broader, until the slightest breath of wind disorganized the wearer's headgear altogether.

A happy idea then struck some hatter, for he elaborated the device of looping. This simple expedient gave a grand opportunity for the artistic minded traders of the period, and there consequently ensued all sorts of "cocks."

The old-fashioned, low crowned beaver, with a broad brim looped up equally on three sides, became the cocked hat which prevailed until comparatively recent times.

Watch the Enemy.—There is in the bosom of every human being, whatever his surroundings may be, an instinctive sense of right and wrong. These two principles are ever at war with each other in the human breast, and our acts are good or evil in proportion as we listen to their teachings. The moment a young girl entertains an impure thought against the strong remonstrance of purity, she is lost—the moment a young man allows his sense of honor to sleep, his destruction is certain.

Scientific and Useful.

Poison.—The dangerous character of aconite, or monkshood leaves, is well known to most grown persons, but children need instruction to avoid those large palm-shaped leaves which are dark green on the upper surface. This most deadly of vegetable poison causes great depression, often blindness, tingling all over the body, parching and burning of the throat and stomach, and finally death ensues.

Getting Air.—An ingenious apparatus to procure air from very high altitudes has been devised by MM. Georges Besancon and Gustave Hermitte, the meteorologists. A vacuum is made in a receptacle holding about six litres and the tap is attached to clockwork that will open at the end of an hour, leave it open for a minute and then close it. This is sent up in a balloon, together with other self-registering instruments, to heights at which human beings cannot live.

In the Throat.—The difficulty of removing fish bones and similar obstructions, impacted at the lower end of the œsophagus, is well known, and various mechanical measures and appliances have been invented to deal with the difficulty. One of the most simple, effectual remedies in the case of impaction of such foreign bodies is to administer a pint of milk, and forty minutes afterward an emetic of sulphate of zinc. The fluid easily passes the obstruction, and is, of course, rapidly coagulated in the stomach into a more or less solid mass, which, on being ejected forces the obstruction before it, and so effects its removal.

Shoe-Blacking Without Acid.—Let from three to four pounds of lampblack and half a pound of bone-black be well mixed with five pounds of glycerine and treacle. Meanwhile two and a half ounces of gutta percha should be cautiously fused in a copper or iron saucepan, and ten ounces of olive oil added, with continual stirring, and afterwards one ounce of stearine. Add the warm mass to the former mixture, and then a solution of five ounces of gum senegal in one and a half pound of water, and one drachm each of oil of rosemary and lavender. For use, the blacking may be diluted with three to four parts of water. This blacking keeps the leather soft, and renders it more durable.

Farm and Garden.

Straw.—Bright and clean straw is very useful on the farm and should not be wasted simply because it is cheap. Cattle will sometimes eat it as a relish, even when they can get better food, and it is never too plentiful if straw is used more than once as bedding. Straw will greatly assist in keeping the stables clean, and is really valuable considering the uses to which it can be applied.

The Horse.—The quality of farm help is more nearly tested by its ability to manage a team without abusing it than by any other one thing. The horse is a sensitive, nervous animal, and if abused, as it often is, it soon becomes restless and finally obstinate and vicious. A great many horses are ruined by the poor quality of farm help, which is now so common. If better help cannot be procured it may be necessary to do as is done by Southern farmers—breed mules, which will resent ill treatment so promptly that they will be less likely to be abused than is the horse.

Beets.—No other kind of root is so greedily eaten by pigs as the beet. It may not have so much nutrition as the potato, but what it has is sweet, and therefore is palatable. Even the fattening hogs will eat some beets every day, and should have them. But their best use is as green feed for sows that are giving milk. It will increase the quantity greatly, but it will need some grain feed with it to keep the sow thus fed from losing flesh too rapidly. It is expected, of course, that the sow will grow poor while suckling her young, but if this goes too far her value as a breeder is lessened, and the next litter of pigs will be deficient in either number or in vigor and size.

Whooping Cough, Croup and Hoarseness are efficaciously treated by Dr. D. Jayne's Expectorant. It removes difficulty of breathing and oppression in the throat and lungs, promotes the ejection of mucus, and subdues the violence of complaints at the outset. The best family Jayne's Painless Sanative.

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FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

ISSUED WEEKLY AT 726 SANSOM ST.

A. E. SMYTHE, Publisher

PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER 12 1896.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.
[IN ADVANCE.]

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Of Familiarity.

It is a matter of the commonest experience that men differ from one another in nothing more than in their capacity for being familiar. One man is notoriously easy "to get on with," while another is equally hard to approach. One is expansive, communicative, and a free talker, while another is reserved, and closely muffled, as it were, in his own cloak. One will be confidential on the strength of ten minutes' acquaintance; another is so reticent by nature that he would not open his heart to the companion who shared his solitude.

It may not be an exact definition, but it approximately hits the mark, if we say that familiarity implies the discussion of one's personal affairs with another. The old root-meaning still exists in the word if we search deep enough; and a familiar friend is one who has become one of the family—not the family of blood-relationship, but that of the inner circle of acquaintance. Hence familiarity and friendship approach very near together in signification, and the almost redundant phrase, "familiar friend," may be regarded as a sort of superlative degree of "acquaintance."

Of two evils, the over-familiar, oppressively-friendly man is, we should say, less appalling than the absolutely unapproachable man. The latter is a rarer type than the former; but do we not all know him? He seems suspicious of all mankind, and shelters himself behind the most rigid rules of etiquette. He will never receive the slightest advance which has not its foundation in a formal introduction; and even with this starting-point he is icily polite to those who seek his acquaintance. You can never get him to listen with any show of interest to your affairs, nor to impart more than the most commonplace information with regard to his own.

At first sight it would seem as though he were specially antagonistic to yourself, and you begin to wonder why it is he so steadfastly sets his face against any approach to friendliness on your part. But a little deeper knowledge of the man will show you that he is but exhibiting his habitual manner. You may see, if you follow up your clue, that he is incapable of what the world understands by friendliness. Even in his family circle he is unable to break through his reserve. He treats his wife with the most perfect deference, and his children with cold but watchful affection. In his own way he is deeply interested in and fond of them. But they are not admitted to his confidence, because it is impossible to him to confide in any one; he cannot show them his heart, because it is locked away in a recess which he has no power to open.

You may know what he does, but never what he feels. What to an ordinary man would be a pleasure does not disturb his equanimity, nor yet what, to another, would bring obvious pain. Apparently he feels neither the one nor the other. Yet, if you could but break through his reserve, you would doubtless find that he experiences the emotions known to ordinary mortals, though he keeps them buried deep below the surface. What is the cause of this man's extraordinary variance from the opposite type?

If egotism is at the bottom of the tendency of the one to over-familiarity and the intrusion of his personality where it is not desired, is it not equally likely that the same failing is responsible for the extraordinary taciturnity of the other? It certainly is not modesty or shyness which is responsible for the cloak of reservation. Nor is it a well-meaning desire to avoid forcing his affairs upon those who do not ask his confidences, for he is equally reticent with those who do. All we can say is that it is his humor; the pathology of the case needs closer investigation than we are able to bestow upon it.

Leaving however these extreme types on one side, we see daily the marked difference in the capacity of men to be familiar, to join easily in a new circle, to receive new friends. The capacity for being familiar is more observable in men than in women, because men are so much more nomadic, moving constantly among fresh scenes, pitching their tents here and there in the world, and for ever widening the circle of their acquaintance. And have you not frequently noticed how one man will adapt himself at once to his new surroundings, while another will be as uneasy as an animal that has changed its home? Those who live in provincial towns and in the country, where social circles are more clearly defined, have opportunities of noticing this more than those who live the interwoven life of a big city.

There are men whose occupation takes them to a new town who in a week will be almost as much at home as if they had lived there all their lives. They find their level at once, and make the most of it. No sooner have they followed up their first introduction, or met the first likely comrade that chance throws in their way, than they take up the position of an old and familiar friend. They start at once comparing notes with their new-found acquaintance, relate such of their own history as may seem to be necessary in the way of credentials, and then set diligently to inquire all about the life and personnel of their new neighbors.

Have we not all experienced this fact in meeting for the first time a man who was destined to play some part in our social life? Have we not been charmed by the way in which he seemed to grasp the essential points of the situation, and to pick up the chit-chat of our own set? Almost instantly he is in touch with all our own personalities and our local interests, and has shown the capacity he has for being familiar. Intuitively he seems to understand human nature, and to be able to adapt himself to whatever is presented to him, to be cordial with whomsoever Fate throws in his way.

Putting aside however the contributing causes of familiarity and the lack of it, its advantages and disadvantages are worth a little consideration. Do we, on the whole, prefer the easily familiar, or those who are difficult to approach, and is familiarity a quality to be cultivated or not? At the first rough glance we should perhaps be inclined to plump for familiarity; but there is a good deal to be said in favor of reserve.

Of course it is to be taken for granted that we expect and desire familiarity among friends—indeed, as we have previously said, the terms are almost identical. But is it well that friendships should be easily made? Has not one sometimes a slight feeling of distrust towards the man who makes friends right and left with every new acquaintance that chance throws in his way? Is it a case of "lightly come and lightly go?" Should we not bring the critical faculty into play in forming our friendships? It is necessary to discriminate between friendliness and friendship.

The man is a boor who cannot show friendliness to all and sundry who cross his path; but familiarity is a different matter. To give it a very rough definition, it involves an interchange of purely personal conversation, of an opening of the soul to a confidant; and the degrees of friendship may be reckoned in proportion to the amount of confidence they evoke. Your real friend is the one to whom you tell everything, or almost everything, that you tell yourself.

This is where the over-familiar persons to whom we have referred seem to go astray. They proclaim their affairs on the house-tops, as it were. They seem to have no special friends, but to place all acquaintances on an equality. Is it possible to avoid feeling a little suspicious of the man who, being introduced to you by the merest chance, straightaway asks you to dinner, and proceeds to confide to you things which you feel should not be for your ears—domestic troubles, love-affairs, pecuniary matters, or what not? Pride is a quality which has an undeservedly bad name; in many cases it is an inestimable characteristic, and it certainly plays a not unworthy part in the choice of friends.

At the least friendship should be a bargain—not a formally-arranged compact, but an understanding. And one's proper personal pride should resent the too familiar advances of a comparative stranger, as it should avoid too familiar advances on one's own part. To study how to be at ease in all classes of society and in any circle is useful and important; but it is no less important to learn how to maintain a proper reserve, and to keep hasty familiarity within due bounds. Otherwise we are liable, in honoring another man's personality, to despise our own.

IT is the road we are traveling, the every-day tread of our lives, which decides our moral and spiritual quality. The ends which we propose to ourselves are but points in our lives, while life itself is made up of the means we take to further them. All neglect of these means, all indifference to them, all undue haste to get through them, or to brush them aside as tiresome or unimportant, must therefore be fatal to the value of life and the growth of character.

A LOVING word is always a safe word. It may or it may not be a helpful word to the one who hears it; but it is sure to be a pleasant memory to the one who speaks it. Many a word spoken by us is regretted afterwards; but no word of affectionate appreciation to which we have given utterance finds a place among our sadly-remembered expressions.

THERE are few characteristics more valuable than that which gives a reputation for absolute truthfulness. One may decline to express any views on a given subject and not be open to criticism; but whatever is said should be unimpeachable and as frankly uttered as possible.

SELF is the point from which all our power must be drawn; but its effects are far beyond our sight or ken, reaching to family and friends, to all those who profit by our abilities and labors, to those whom we influence consciously or unconsciously, both near and far away.

HE whose business it is to till the ground or to cleanse a building may cherish exactly the same aim as the statesman or the philanthropist—that is, service to others.

IF we would be happy, we should open our ears when among the good and shut them when among the bad.

CONFIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENTS.

M. M.—There are several lists that have been gotten up by eminent men under the title of "The Hundred Best Books." This list any publishing house will send. You might address, for the purpose, the "F. A. Stokes Publishing Company, New York City," or "Porter & Coates, Philadelphia, Pa."

L. N. C.—Meerschaum (German for sea foam, so called from its lightness and whitish appearance) is a hydrous silicate of magnesia. It is of a soft, earthy texture, somewhat resembling chalk and is found in various parts of southern Europe, in veins of serpentine, and in tertiary deposits. It is easily cut, and when first removed from the bed is of a cheese-like consistency. It is also found in Asia Minor, in alluvium, apparently the result of the decomposition of carbonate of magnesia belonging to neighboring serpentine rocks. For exportation it is roughly shaped into blocks or in rude forms of pipes. The artificial meerschaum, of which the cheaper pipes are manufactured, is made of the chips or parings of the natural mineral, which are reduced to fine powder, boiled in water, moulded and dried, sometimes pipeclay being added to the mixture.

KELLY.—Your first two questions are very simple, and your last is indefinite. The earth is surrounded by an ocean of air, which is dense near the earth's surface, and rare or thin at a distance from the surface. At ten miles high the air would not contain enough oxygen to keep you alive if you were then in a balloon. It is the oxygen in the atmosphere that causes burning bodies to glow. It is only when meteoric stones get into the denser air that is well provided with oxygen that they glow and can be seen. They are called "stones" because, when they fall on the earth—as they often do—they look like stones. You ask what power causes the planets to go through their regular rotations. Any primer on astronomy sets forth the natural laws which account for the regular motion of the heavenly bodies. Those laws tell you what is; but, if you keep asking why, you soon get back to unfathomable first causes.

BERT.—Your trouble—bashfulness—does not excite nearly so much sympathy as it deserves. Some children and young people suffer positive torture when they find themselves in a position in which they attract notice. It is not sufficient to say, as rough, unthinking people do, that it is silly to be self-conscious, for the bashful girl or youth is convinced, without being told, that shyness appears silly; and that conviction is one of the chief causes of pain and self-reproach. The only cure is to mix freely with company and firmly to determine to master the weakness. We have known instances in which extreme bashfulness has been overcome by resolution, and the process has had a rich value in moulding character and bracing the will. It is possible for a girl, all shrinking and blushes, to school herself until she becomes a self-possessed woman, made perhaps a little too calm and cold by the practice of repression. The remedy is in your own hands; only seek society rather than shun it.

C. C. H.—Moths deposit their eggs in the early spring. That, therefore, is the time to put away furs or woollens for the summer. It is not the moth, but the maggot of the moth that does the mischief with furs. To effectually preserve them from the ravages of these insects, thoroughly beat the furs with a thin rattan, and air them for several hours; then carefully comb them with a clean comb, wrap them up in newspapers, perfectly tight, and put them away in a thoroughly tight chest, lined with tin, or cedar wood. Take them out and examine them in the sun, at least once a month, thoroughly beating them. Camphor, which is so much used to preserve furs, will keep away the moths, but it impairs the beauty of the furs by turning them light. The printing ink on the newspapers is just as effectual as the camphor, it being very distasteful to the moth. Leathers may be preserved in the same way. For woollens, or clothing generally, camphor may be used without injury to the fabric, but the mode suggested for furs—putting them in newspapers—is better because of the strong, and to many disagreeable odor with which camphor impregnates them.

C. S.—You ask if we think that the interests of capital and labor can ever be satisfactorily adjusted. Ever is a very long period, and a great deal can be done in it. The tendency of human affairs, taken in their entire sweep, is in the direction of fairer adjustments between conflicting interests. The movement is slow and difficult; but, nevertheless, it is constantly going on. The general diffusion of education among the masses of the people is beginning to tell powerfully in favor of the movement. As people become more intelligent, they become more reasonable, and are more and more governed by their minds than by their passions. Of course, there is still too much unreasonableness among men. Probably there is not one person in all the world who is always governed by reason and never gives way to follies of temper. And when people get excited by contentions for what they believe to be their rights, it is to be expected that a great deal will be done on all sides which will make the judicious grieve. Still, the great movements towards the better adjustment of the interests of capital and labor will in the long run doubtless prove to be beneficial to the human race, and in the course of time it is probable that the bed rock of equity and fairness will be reached, on which the interests of all parties may safely rest.

MY GIFT.

BY J. C. L.

If there should fall you, in some future day,
A love you thought was very strong and true,
If suddenly there should be swept away
A happiness you thought had come to you.

If crushed the best of all your Faith should lie
Because a heart you trusted as your own
Had failed you suddenly. If hope should die
Because you have to face the pain alone.

If suffering undeserved come near your life,
Misunderstandings, bitterness of pain;
If sin should ever make you yield the strife,
And others turn aside in slow disdain.

Remember—there is here one faithful heart
Whose love will stand by you, through good or ill,
Though years to come may set us far apart
This steadfast love will stand beside you still.

Remember—I have given you of my best,
This love I humbly lay before your feet
Longs just to serve and help you; for the rest,
I only ask you not to spurn it—sweet.

Ever and Ever.

BY RITA

EARLY and late, all through the snowy January day, Rita Gray had toiled, working harder than many a little general servant.

Her clever fingers, willing feet, and active brain had been kept on the alert, till throbbing nerves and aching muscles almost refused to do their owner's bidding.

The Vinings did not mean to be unkind. It had been "Where's Rita?" "Rita can alter that skirt in a minute!" "Tell Rita to come and speak to mother—she can't remember if the Frasers were invited to the 'At home' or to the dance!" "I want Rita to see about the piano being moved!"

"Come, child—how slow you are! There is all that china waiting to be dusted!"—and so on, ad infinitum, upstairs and downstairs, till the very walls seemed to echo with Rita's name.

Whatever there was to do—and, to all appearances, Strathmore House was being turned "upside down"—Rita was always in request, always being scolded if anything went wrong, but seldom receiving a word of thanks or praise when her efforts were crowned with success.

Maude Vining, the eldest daughter of the house, in whose honor all this stir was being made, was far too much taken up with the thought of herself as a bride on the following day to worry over less important details.

Ever since Rita had come, an orphan child, into the big turbulent household ten years before, Maude had regarded her in the light of her own special "fag," and the other members of the family were not slow to follow her example.

Mrs. Vining salved her conscience with the reflection that but for her Rita would have been absolutely homeless and, as far as any one can tell, friendless. She was a frail-looking little creature, with a slight undeveloped figure and wistful dark-blue eyes—eyes that had a trick of haunting people's memories with their black lashes and heavy lids.

But for these eyes and a profusion of bronze curly hair, she would have passed in a crowd as almost wholly insignificant, and did, in fact, so pass amongst the good-looking boys and girls who ruled Strathmore House with a high hand and a loud-pitched voice.

The father of this noisy young crew could scarcely be suspected of being really master in his own home. He certainly paid the rent and taxes; but he rarely interfered with his family so long as there were a good dinner and a quiet corner left for him by the fire when he returned from his day's work in the city.

"I say, Rita, you look jolly well played out!" Charlie Vining remarked late that evening, as he lolled back on the school room sofa, his legs in an elevated position some degrees higher than his head, munching an apple and stroking a small terrier that had crept close to him. Although still at school, he had plenty of discernment, also a natural inclination to espouse the cause of the weak.

"Oh, I'm only a little tired!" Rita replied cheerfully, intent on retrimming a hat that had been pronounced unwearable by its owner. "Of course a wedding means a lot of extra work."

"I don't see the sense of such a bother, if it knocks up other people," observed Charlie. "Hallo, Rita—they're wanting you again! Shut up there!" he added, in a louder tone. "It's only Maggie. Let her wait; you're not her slave!"

"Oh, but I must go!" Rita answered, springing up with nervous haste. "Her dress wants altering for to-morrow night. Don't let the Sphinx touch Mary's hat, there's a good boy, whilst I am gone!"

"Well, I call it a beastly shame!" muttered the boy, as the door closed behind Rita's flying figure, and then applied himself philosophically to the adventures of Masterman Ready.

It was womanish to bother over what could not be helped; but he experienced a fresh outburst of wrath when the wedding party left the house before him on the following afternoon, with Rita shut up in the drawingroom arranging a big box of flowers that had only just arrived.

"I suppose it's no good my staying to help you?" he remarked, pulling on a pair of kid gloves, an abomination to him. "Hang it—there goes a button! You couldn't sew it on—could you?" he added inconsistently.

Of course Rita could! Thimble, needle, and thread were produced from her pocket; and Charlie waited, gasping with impatience, and then hurried away.

Rita turned rather forlornly to her unfinished task. She had dressed the bride and pinned the veil and fastened the orange-blossoms securely, and had assisted at the bridesmaids' toilettes as well, and she had hoped to be able to view the general effect at the church, which was only a few yards away.

She did not aspire to the rank of bridesmaid, or feel entitled to sit amongst the guests; all she had wished for was to creep in at the last moment amongst the general public, where her shabby brown frock would pass unnoticed, and she could watch the wedding procession from a dark corner, and, above all, hear the glad strains of the "Wedding March."

For the only thing that seemed to belong to her own personality, apart from her daily life, was an intense, a never-satisfied, an ever-present love for music—a love that almost amounted to a passion. However, things were against her that day, and she set to work bravely at the yellow daffodils and white narcissus, humming a gay little tune meanwhile to keep up her spirits.

She had not been long left alone, when her quick ears caught the sound of wheels on the gravel outside; there was a slight commotion at the door, then Charlie dashed into the room.

"Here's a go!" he exclaimed. "The organist has never turned up—wires to say he has influenza; another man can't be found for love or money! Maude's nearly in tears; and Whyte's in an awful stew! I promised to fetch you just to give them the 'Wedding March' as they come come down the aisle. Be quick—hurry up! There's no time to lose!"

"Oh, Charley, how could you?" gasped Rita. "You know I can't play well enough; and before these people! You don't mean it seriously? Did Aunt Maria really send you?"

"Of course she did, and was only too thankful to do so! Don't be a flat, Rita, or show the white feather! Fetch your hat, for goodness' sake; they're tying them up now!"

Infected with his earnestness, she did the boy's bidding, and, almost before she knew it, had relinquished the flowers to a housemaid, hurriedly put on a hat and jacket, thrust her gloveless hands into a muff, and found herself being hurried up the side aisle of the church and into the organ-loft.

Fortunately a protracted homily was being given by the Vicar, and she had time to pull out stops, examine pedals, and hunt through a portfolio of music that had been left conveniently open.

She had never played in public before, though her one pleasure had been to steal into the church on Saturday afternoons whenever Charlie was accommodating enough to act the part of "blower." He belonged to the choir, and had coaxed the organist into granting Rita this greatly-prized privilege.

The girl bent down from her high perch and looked admiringly at the bride and bridegroom at the altar-rails, the group of bridesmaids radiantly happy with their presentation-bangles and bouquets of yellow roses and brown leaves, the "best man" gazing rather absently, with folded arms, at the arched roof and gilded frescoes.

Rita, leaning over the organ gallery, could just see his up-turned face, dark and strong, with aquiline profile and deep-set eyes. The church was fairly full of gaily-attired guests and an interested crowd in the background.

Rita's heart beat very fast when the signal was given to her to begin, and she touched the keys with cold trembling fingers.

The first throbbing note however gave her confidence; she began with a few simple chords, that glided into a sort little melody, setting off some of the guests into a subdued murmur of talk, whilst everybody wandered how the deliverence had come. It was quite easy after that. Rita forgot all her nervous forebodings, and played on, as if indeed the spirit of music had entered her soul, changing from grave to gay, from the subtle melody of the half improvised nocturne to the jubilant strains of the "Wedding March."

"You're a brick, Rita, and can shut up now!" Charlie exclaimed, as the church gradually emptied, and only the casual crowd remained about the doors. "We had better get out of this; everybody's gone home!"

Rita's eyes shone and glowed from excitement; in spite of the shabby frock and faded straw hat, an indescribable attractiveness lingered on her face, lighting up her small features and delicate coloring.

Charlie thought she was going to cry, for her lips quivered. With a boy's innate horror of "scenes," he dragged her away with such force that they both nearly came into collision with a tall dark man, who was waiting patiently within the shadow of the church door.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Railton, is it?" Charlie exclaimed. "I thought you had all gone off home. Rita, this is Mr. Railton, the 'best man,' you know."

Roger Railton smiled at this rough and-ready introduction.

"I could not leave the church for two or three good reasons," he answered, regarding Rita with interest. "I wanted to thank—Miss Rita, is it?—for helping us out of our difficulty, and also to convey to her the heartfelt thanks of the bride and bridegroom. I waited, too, to see if I could be of any service to her on the way home. Of course I did not know that she was already provided with an escort."

"Oh, yes—Rita's all right when she is with me!" Charlie said, pitying his cousin's frightened shyness. "Don't you bother about her, she will have a heap of things to look after directly!"

Roger began to think that there was something wrong, that things were not quite as smooth as they appeared at the Vining establishment.

"A carriage is waiting to take you home," he remarked, in rather a puzzled way.

"Thank you; please don't trouble," murmured Rita mechanically. She was longing to get away and hide herself, and did not at all enjoy the scrutiny of the calm keen eyes fixed upon her.

The altercation was ended by their all getting into the carriage. Roger looked compassionately at Rita. She was hardly old enough to have left school, he concluded, as they exchanged commonplace remarks about the weather and such-like topics.

Fortunately the drive lasted only a few moments; and Railton was guzzled by Rita's sudden flight and disappearance into some unknown region of the house.

"Cinderella revived!" he muttered to himself; then, catching Charlie's questioning eyes, he added, "Isn't your little cousin coming into the drawingroom? Perhaps, though, she is shy, and doesn't care about society."

Charlie chuckled at this suggestion.

"She has other fish to fry!" he remarked inelegantly. "The mater would be dreadfully put out if she left her work like that! Rita's a regular brick, you know, in her way!"—with which delightfully vague remark he left Roger, who was as much in the dark as ever.

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An interval of peace had come to the noisy household. The bride and bridegroom had departed in the usual shower of rice and satin slippers, and the guests were now dispersed, with the exception of a favored few staying in the house.

Some hours must elapse before the next excitement would begin—a dance, to be held at a hall hired for the purpose. The strained nerves of the hostess and her daughters might therefore relax.

Rita received a summons to her aunt's bedroom, and found her reclining on the sofa, comfortably arrayed in a terra-cotta-colored tea-gown.

"I hear you played remarkably well in church to-day," Mrs. Vining said graciously. "You certainly filled a very awkward blank, and I feel quite pleased you should have turned your music to such good account. As a reward I should like you to go to the dance to night."

Rita's cheeks flushed with pleasure—it was such a new experience to hear a word of praise.

"Thank you, Aunt Maria; you are too kind! But I don't think I have a dress fit to wear."

"There is that black net of Maude's; you can manage to make it do, I expect. You will find it in the cupboard in her room. Run away now and set to work, for I feel quite worn out with all this excitement, and must rest a little."

Mrs. Vining closed her eyes as she spoke, and Rita withdrew noiselessly. It never once occurred to her to seek the rest she herself needed so badly. She stretched her aching limbs, plunged her face into cold water, and then hunted up the discarded ball dress, which had a great tear across the front breadth and was "a world too large" in the waist.

The sewing machine and a hot iron however did wonders, and set her free to assist at her cousins' elaborate toilettes by the time they were ready for her services.

"Why, Rita, you are a regular howler!" Charlie exclaimed excitedly, as she came downstairs to wait for the return of the carriage that had already made two journeys to the hall.

"What a shame you haven't any flowers! Here—wait a minute!" He dashed into the drawingroom, and came back with his hands full of jonquils. "Pin these in—just so, by your throat—there's plenty of time! I've never seen you in this rig before! What a jolly neck and arms you have! May has half emptied the powder box over hers; but you don't seem to want that sort of thing. I don't mind being left till the last. Do you?"

No—Rita minded nothing. She was going to the dance for the sake of the music, of looking on, of being "in the swim" with her little world, and she felt quite elated with excitement and pleasure. The fatigue of the last twenty four hours entirely disappeared.

"I only want to hear the band," she explained confidentially to Charlie, who was accustomed to her way of viewing things, and never expressed the least surprise at any of her statements. "Of course I don't expect to dance. You must find me a quiet corner somewhere out of the way."

"That's all bosh!" exclaimed the boy. "You may not be a fashionable beauty, but you're not likely to be left out in the cold. However, I'm not keen on dancing myself, so we can sit out most of the business together, unless——" He paused suddenly, with a vivid schoolboy blush.

"Unless Ethel is gracious!" Rita finished for him. "Of course she will be, and you must go and ask her for a dance the very first thing, before her card gets filled up."

Rita felt inclined to shrink into the background when she entered the ballroom, with its brilliant lights, handsome decorations, and atmosphere of melody and movement. Charlie found her a seat near to his mother, who was still "receiving" at the doorway, and then went off to seek the object of his adoration.

The band was playing a low tender prelude, when Roger Railton came up to Rita.

"You have not filled up your programme yet? Ah, that is fortunate for me! I have been hoping for this waltz." He did not think it worth while to add that he had scarcely recognised the shabby little organist of the morning in the wearer of the black net dress, that only served to throw the snowy throat and shoulders into clearer contrast, and enhanced the beauty of the well poised head and sparkling eyes.

"I—I am afraid I can't dance," Rita replied, blushing a little over the confession.

"You needn't be afraid—trust yourself to me," he said, smiling kindly into the startled eyes.

Without another moment's hesitation she rose and put her hand upon his arm. A gliding motion, and they were off. Ah, she had never dreamed that dancing could be like this! The crowded ballroom faded away like a misty dream; the scent of the hothouse flowers, the brilliant lights, the throbbing rhythm of the music, were for these two, and these two only!

Not a word passed between them whilst the perfect measure flowed on, until, pausing in a quiet corner, she looked up, to find her partner's eyes meeting hers in a long eloquent gaze. And in that look of mutual sympathy she crossed the indefinable border "where the brook and river meet."

"Let me see your programme—you are not afraid now?" Roger murmured, inspecting the dainty card hanging from the silken girdle at her waist.

It was, as he expected to find it, abso-

lutely blank. Without waiting for further permission, he scribbled his initials as many times as he dared, and, handing it back, drew her again into the maze of dancers.

Other men came up when that waltz was over, greatly to Rita's astonishment, and begged for the favor of "just one dance," until her card was filled. She saw no more of Charlie that night, except for occasional glimpses across the crowd, which made her feel quite happy on his account. Apparently he had been smiled upon by his divinity.

"Time is a curious sort of delusion," Roger Railton said softly during the evening, looking down at Rita's tell-tale, face, which had already learned to change at his approach. "Who would have thought that you and I had never met until to-day? I suppose, if we believed in the transmigration of souls, we should discover we had often met before in another life? What do you think?"

Rita evidently preferred keeping her thoughts to herself; she bent her head and toyed nervously with her fan, until she felt constrained to look up and smile.

"We have never met until to day," she said dreamily.

They were standing in the dimly-lighted conservatory, the air of which was sweet with the scent of flowers; the lace-curtains at the entrance stirred softly with the movement of the dancers in the room beyond; there was a murmur of voices, and the bewitchment of music was throwing a glamor over everything.

Suddenly there came before the girl's startled eyes a vision of what life would look like on the morrow—the same groove, the same petty interests, the same incessant round of work. For a moment she hated it by contrast. She saw the dark little room to which she would return; then would come the early rising the next morning, the hurried scramble over dressing by gaslight, the loud demands for coffee and bread-and-butter from her boy-cousins, the breakfast trays to be filled and carried up-stairs to aunt Maria and anybody else who might be inclined to linger in their warm beds.

Yes—and she must be responsible for it all. Would it not seem tenfold more unbearable than ever? Burning tears rose in her eyes, her throat contracted with the agony of her thoughts.

Roger regarded her silently, putting "two and two" together, and managing to reckon up matters with a fair degree of accuracy. He placed his hand gently upon her arm.

"Come with me," he said kindly; "you must not worry over fate like that. Tell me—what is the trouble?"

A spasm of pain passed over her face. She looked up speechlessly at him, as though he were an oracle able to explain the mysteries of her lot.

"I can't put it into words," she answered; "but my life seems simple starvation. I could get on all right if I hadn't a soul!"

"Why, what good would that do?" returned Roger.

"It would do me all the good in the world," she answered, "if I were only a machine! Machines can go on and on with the same work day after day, asking for nothing beyond; and, when they are worn out, they can be thrown on one side, and nobody is any the worse for it. I wish I hadn't come to this dance," she continued, with a change of tone; "you see it has only made me talk nonsense! To-morrow——" She paused.

"Yes—what about to-morrow?" he inquired.

"Oh, to-morrow will be as yesterday!" she answered, a look of weariness settling down upon her sweet young face. "Not quite the same, though. I forgot! I am going over to Maude's new home at Streatham, to put things straight there."

"Whilst they are away on their honeymoon? But you will not be alone, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! The caretaker will be there, of course; but she doesn't know about anything. Maude has explained to me exactly how she wants the rooms arranged."

"By Jove, cousins must be remarkably useful—far more to be relied upon than machines! How long are you to be stationed there?"

"I don't know," the girl answered indifferently; "it depends on how long I am wanted. Aunt Maria will decide——"

"Come on, Rita—time's up!" interrupted Charlie, suddenly appearing upon the scene. "The carriage is waiting for you, mother says."

As Roger wrapped a thick woollen shawl around Rita's slim shoulders, he whispered—

"You won't let that caretaker turn me from the door if I should happen to be in your direction one day, will you?"

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The wedding had taken place on Tuesday. For the rest of that week Rita had all her work cut out. She never objected to work; and just now, for some unaccountable reason, she was thankful to lose mental aspirations and discomfort in hard physical labor by day, which resulted in deep slumbers at night.

Mrs. Vining drove over once or twice to see that all was going on well at Streatham; and by the time Saturday came it seemed to Rita as if an immeasurable gulf separated her from her recent intensely-happy evening. In spite of herself, her heart gave a great leap when the door bell of the little red brick villa rang violently, and Mrs. Jones, the deaf old caretaker, went gasping and groaning to answer the summons.

Rita remained down-stairs, engaged in making an inventory of the pots and pans in the kitchen. What a sight she must look in her big holland apron tied over the short brown frock? Involuntarily she flew to the little square looking-glass hanging behind the pantry door, and smoothed back the unruly curls from her forehead.

"It's a gentleman, miss, as wants to speak to you," Mrs. Jones announced, returning with a creaking step and regarding Rita with quite a new interest. She put her hand into her pocket as she spoke, where she fingered with great satisfaction certain silver coins that had only lately found their way there.

"Didn't he give his name?" Rita asked.

"Yes—I put him just inside the droring-room," Mrs. Jones answered, with the placid assurance of one wholly deaf.

Well, there was no help for it—she must go and receive her visitor. Without waiting for further parley, Rita ran up-stairs, to find Roger Railton pacing the half-furnished drawing room impatiently.

"At last!" he exclaimed, detaining her hand a little longer than was necessary. "Why, child, what have you been doing with yourself? You look thoroughly tired out!"

"Oh, no—I am quite well, thanks!" Rita answered, trying to do the "honors" in a quiet composed way.

"I don't believe you are taking enough care of yourself," Roger continued discontentedly. "I am going to ask you to let me prescribe for you. Don't you think some music might help to bring the roses back to those pale cheeks?"

With a feeling of astonishment Rita looked first at her visitor, then at the piano.

"No, child—no amateur efforts," he said, interpreting her glance. "This is Saturday afternoon, you know, and Norudo and Patti are to play at St. James' Hall. Suppose you were to put on your hat and come with me there for half an hour or so—would it bore you terribly?"

"Bore me?" Rita's dark-blue eyes suddenly flashed like jewels; then a troubled look came into them as she remembered conventionalities. "There is so much work to get through still," she faltered. "I don't think I can come, thank you!"

"That is not the true reason," he said quietly, looking at her with a kind smile. "You are afraid of the proprieties. Don't deny it! I can see it in your face!"

"I was thinking of aunt Maria," Rita admitted mournfully; "she would say it would not do at all."

"Bother aunt Maria!" Roger exclaimed. "I will set the matter right with her if a settlement should be necessary. Where can be the possible harm? Here you are longing—yes, longing—for a break in the clouds; and how can they be dispersed in a better, purer way than by music? You can look upon my society as a sort of necessary evil—imagine me your elder brother for the time being. Little sister, can't you trust yourself to me?"

He spoke in the same tone as when he induced her to dance; and once again she looked at him as if trying to read his inmost soul, and once again yielded to his will.

"Yes—I will come," she answered, as a child.

There was a little necessary delay whilst Rita flew downstairs to tell Mrs. Jones she was going out, and the caretaker, in spite of her deafness, seemed to grasp the situation perfectly. She nodded sagaciously, begged Miss Rita "not to worry about nothing" during her absence—she would see to whatever might be wanted, and, as soon as the door clanged behind the seekers after music, began to sweeten her solitude with another look at Roger's half-crowns and a series of cautious sips from a black bottle kept in the special cupboard set apart for her own personal property.

Whilst Mrs. Jones dosed peacefully beside the kitchen fire, Rita was being transported into another world. She would have been less than human had she failed to be touched by Roger's scrupulous care of her throughout the brief journey by train and hansom. As he chatted to her in a pleasant easy fashion on all manner of topics, her scruples as to the irregularity of the whole proceeding vanished. How could any one—even aunt Maria—object to this innocent form of pleasuring?

Up to the moment of their being comfortably seated right in the centre of the spacious hall Roger felt instinctively that his mere presence dominated Rita, moulded her mind into a receptivity that he felt was very pleasant. But, when the first note from the violin vibrated through the air, the girl slipped away from his influence altogether. She leaned forward slightly, her eyes sparkling, then growing misty with tears, her face almost strained in its expression of intense concentrated absorption.

She was his companion no longer in the fullest sense of the word; the spirit of music claimed her for its own; she could but follow its beckoning finger. She forgot herself—her own petty hopes and fears, her orphanhood, her wounded sense of justice and fair-dealing. Surely there could be nothing else worth living for compared with this wonderful mysterious power that healed all wounds with a magic virtue of its own!

"It is over!" she cried with a gasp, when the last note had died away and the performers had disappeared.

The crowd, snatching up programmes and personal properties, rose and left their seats, in a hurry to depart. Roger and Rita rose too. The girl looked utterly faint and exhausted in the sudden reaction that followed the unwonted strain of feeling.

"You must come and have some tea," he said promptly; "there is a place close by which is not at all bad, and won't be overcrowded either. You don't want any? Oh, yes, you do! It will just save you from having a bad headache."

The sense of being looked after, cared for, was so new that she could but yield to it. It was such an entirely novel experience to find herself considered of any importance whatever after being crowded out of sight in the big family-circle at Strathmore House.

Roger paused at a small restaurant, with windows partially veiled with buff colored muslin and artistically decorated with flowers and ferns. A waiter came forward, following them into an inner recess, curtained off by yellow draperies from the outer salon, where about a dozen people sat sipping coffee and chatting in low undertones. There was nobody at all in the inner room; a small fire burnt cheerily in the polished steel grate.

Roger made his companion take possession of a deep arm-chair, and, turning to the man, gave some rapid directions in French. Rita slowly loosened a fur boa about her neck and gazed at the fire, feeling strangely uneasy in her mind.

"Isn't that chair comfortable? My sister always makes me bring her in here when we happen to be in town together," Roger said, with a tender look and smile which lulled her thoughts.

What folly not to trust him! She questioned him shyly about his sister, who was the only relative he had in the world. Apparently they had been a model brother and sister—or, rather, had been until Elsie's marriage, a year before, to a certain Colonel Graves had left him free to follow the dictates of a bachelor life.

In the quiet talk that followed Rita learned a great deal about Roger's personal history, his ambitions, failures, and successes. She found that he spent his time between rather precarious work at the Bar and some literary pursuits, which seemed to stand first in his affections.

He talked on about himself in a way that was perfectly irresistible to Rita's shy reserved nature. No one had ever given her his confidence before—always excepting Charlie—and the girl drank in Roger's eagerly, whilst he watched the lights and shadows of her changing face.

Presently she sprang to her feet with a faint sigh, as if suddenly recalled to present realities.

"The time—I had forgotten all about it!" she cried, with a child's frankness. "It must be getting late!"

"It is only seven o'clock," he said soothingly. "Don't startle the wits out of me in that way! If you wish it, we will leave at once."

Through the lighted streets, teeming now with life and excitement, they drove to Victoria. He left her alone with her own thoughts until they were nearing Streatham and the few moments that were left of this brief holiday had almost expired. Then he leaned forward and laid his hand upon her slim fingers.

"Tell me, little one—is this to be the end of our friendship," he asked, "or will you give it an extension of leave?"

"I don't quite understand," she faltered, growing pale beneath his close scrutiny.

"You have only to say the word," he continued, "and I will never trouble you again; and yet I feel as if we had not been blown together by an idle wind of chance. I need you, and, if I mistake not, you need me. Come—shall we make a compact, and swear eternal friendship?"

His voice, half cynical, half playful, had yet an undercurrent of deep feeling in it. Rita let her fingers rest within his warm clasp.

"I will be your friend, if you wish it," she whispered shyly.

"Perhaps, some day, more than friend?" he questioned.

The lights of the station flashed in their eyes; Rita's hour of sentiment was over. There were lights in the upper windows of the tiny villa, though Rita was too absorbed to see them, as she bade her companion a hasty "Good-bye" and ran up the gravel path, which was still strewn with bits of paper, wisps of straw, and other litter left from the furniture vans. She hummed a gay little air as she stood in the porch waiting for the sound of Mrs. Jones' substantial tread across the tiled floor within.

After standing there fruitlessly for a few moments, she knocked—rang again with more vigor than before. She was just going round to the side-entrance, wondering if Mrs. Jones had taken advantage of her absence to visit some of her numerous relatives, when a rapid step crossed the hall, and the door was flung open, to reveal aunt Maria's straight spare figure, with May hovering in the background.

The glamor of that happy afternoon died away instantly; Rita stood trembling like a culprit.

"Come in, Rita!" Mrs. Vining said majestically. "You and I will have to settle reckonings without any palaver."

Rita followed her tremblingly into the partially-furnished dining-room, where the remains of an impromptu meal remained upon the table. The unlucky curtains that were to have been completed that day lay in a heap on the floor beside the deserted sewing-machine. Mrs. Vining pointed to them with an eloquent gesture.

"Your work does not seem to weigh heavily on your mind!" she remarked scathingly.

"I have been to St. James' Hall—to a concert," faltered Rita. Then the girl's failing courage returned. She had done nothing wrong, nothing to be ashamed of, except to run away from her work. "I am very sorry, aunt Maria!" she said, facing the enemy boldly now. "I know I was to blame in leaving so much to be done next week; but I can easily make up for it. Mr. Railton called, and asked me to accompany him to the concert. We had tea together in town, and he has just brought me back. Now you know all there is to know."

"You have been alone—alone with that man?" Mrs. Vining gasped. Then, turning to her daughter, she added, "May, has the girl taken leave of her senses? Does she know that he is engaged already?"

"Why, he's not in our set at all. Constance Barnwell, his fiancee, is an 'Honorable,' and rich and pretty into the bargain. Their engagement has been talked about for months."

Still no answer from the white set lips. Mrs. Vining found her little stock of patience suddenly exhausted.

"At any rate, we can dispense with your services for the present!" she exclaimed harshly. "There—get out of the house at once! You have failed in your duty! Go!"

Mrs. Vining waved her hand towards the door, feeling that her passion was getting beyond her control. Rita gazed at her with panic-stricken eyes. Where she was to go never crossed her mind.

Blindly, with a sick despair and bewilderment seizing her heart and obscuring her brain, she obeyed her aunt's bidding, groping her way down the garden-path, then turning mechanically towards the railway-station.

"I say, mother, that was coming it

rather too strong!" May remarked, as the door closed behind her cousin. "The little fool will never think of going back to Strathmore House! She thought you meant to turn her out of doors altogether."

"Nonsense, May!" returned Mrs. Vining sharply. "She knows me better than that. She certainly isn't fit to be left in charge here. I suppose we must keep Jones till Monday; it's too late to get any one else. You had better go home and send over one of the servants. Rita will have to do her work—that's all!"

May lingered to button her jacket and readjust her hat and veil at the mirror over the fireplace before making her way to the railway-station. She kept a careful look out; but not a trace of the fugitive could be found, either that night or in the days of uncertainty that followed.

* * * * * *

Looking back at that miserable evening, Rita could afterwards recall only a dreamy sense of wretchedness and desolation, from which she was roused at last by hearing a cheerful voice say to her—

"My dear, what ails you? Are you feeling ill?"

With difficulty recovering herself, she found that she was standing in front of a music-shop, mechanically reading the titles of the songs displayed for sale without attaching the least meaning to the words. A neatly dressed little woman of the "shabby-genteel" type stood at her elbow, the tips of a mended black-cotton glove lightly touching her arm.

The question, not having received any answer, was repeated.

"Are you feeling ill? Have you far to go?"

"I am quite well, thanks," Rita answered, adding, after a slight pause, "I have nowhere to go in particular, so that cannot matter."

"If that is so, you had better step in here and keep me company for a bit," she suggested, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. "My rooms are just over the shop, and I am too tired to talk standing. No—don't refuse me!"

She again put her hand upon the girl's arm and guided her to a side door, which she opened with a latch-key. Rita did not offer the slightest resistance, but followed her guide meekly up two flights of narrow uncarpeted stairs into a neatly-furnished room, where a small fire was burning.

Her hostess drew up a leather-covered arm-chair and put her gently into it, watching her with evident satisfaction as the weary head sank back against the welcome support and the heavy eyelids closed.

"Poor child—poor child!" ejaculated Miss Letitia Brailsford, putting her fingers on the girl's slender wrist. "If it isn't little Rita Grey, may I never give another music lesson again! What can have happened to put her in straights like these?"

Lighting a small gas-stove, Miss Brailsford busied herself in preparing some hot tempting soup, and forced a few spoonfuls through the unwilling lips.

"I can't eat—it chokes me!" Rita said plaintively, pushing the cup on one side. "It is very kind of you; but please let me go. This room is stifling me; I must get out into the fresh air!"

For a moment she shook off the lethargy that threatened to overcome her, and, sitting bolt upright, passed one ice-cold hand across her forehead, as if struggling to control her thoughts.

"Yes, yes—you shall go presently," she answered, in low soothing tones. "Of course you are perfectly free to do as you like, only rest a little longer first."

Rita's energy suddenly collapsed; she leaned back again, and the strange torpor once more fell upon her.

All through the night she remained in much the same state; and early the following morning Miss Brailsford despatched a note to a friendly doctor close by.

To Miss Brailsford, who was accustomed to life's ups and downs, it seemed providential to have that one day clear from her ordinary avocation of teaching. Then, when all her arrangements were made, and she had nothing to do but to sit by the girl's bed-side and administer nourishment and medicine at regular intervals, whilst the church bells rang out through the foggy chilliness of the wintry air, her thoughts traveled back to the time when she had taught Rita's aunts, and succumbed to the attractions of Rita's father, then a handsome young cadet at Woolwich.

She had always been faithful to her first love, even when she knew his feeling for her would never go beyond a certain stage of good-comradeship. She had watched his fortunes from afar ever since, wept for his untimely death on a fever-stricken African station, and she had shed bitter unselfish tears for his orphaned child.

It must have been the likeness to the dead father that had haunted her when watching Rita on the evening before; and, as soon as the name "Rita Grey" fell upon her ear, the warm-hearted little woman gave thanks to a kind Providence for at last hearing her prayers, and giving her a link with the unforgotten past.

The days that followed proved very anxious ones. The fever ran high, and, when that had been successfully combated, a time of utter prostration set in, filling the doctor's and nurse's hearts with apprehensions lest, after all, the girl should slip away from them. Then came one terrible twenty four hours when life and death seemed to hang in the balance, and Miss Brailsford never abated her close watching for a quarter of an hour's rest. She hardly dared to question the doctor as he came and went; but, on his third visit late in the evening, he turned to her with a satisfied look.

"She'll do now!" he whispered triumphantly. "It has been a hard fight, but we've won it. Thank heaven, we've won it!"

In less than a week Rita was able to be lifted on to the chintz-covered couch by the fire, and to give some connected account of herself to her kind friend. Miss Brailsford's heart ached as she listened to the tale of weary drudgery and uncongenial companionship.

"You shall never go back to them, my darling!" she vowed. "I have been waiting for you all these years; we have been waiting for each other."

* * * * * *

Two years passed—two years of incessant work and anxiety, brightened by many cheerful hours for Miss Brailsford and Rita Grey. At last there came a night in June—a sultry midsummer night in the height of the London season. Rita had been looking forward to it for weeks, as it was the night on which her greatest ambition was to be gratified, for she was to play at a fashionable concert at the West End.

Step by step she had climbed the ladder, and, while teaching Miss Brailsford's pupils, she had gained some of her own. After a time she was in request for local entertainments in the suburbs, and one night was taken notice of by a "star" in the musical world, who recognised the unwonted brilliancy of the girl's touch, and offered to give her an introduction in high places.

After that, all went well. But never in her wildest dreams had Rita imagined that events could culminate so blissfully as this. During the last few nights she had scarcely slept at all from excitement; and now, when she seated herself before the grand piano, and the violins began tuning up, and she realized how at last she was to take part in the mysterious harmony that must sound like one inspiring voice, she was conscious only of a mild tumultuous joy within her, and lost sight entirely of the sea of upturned faces in the great hall below.

There was some one however who, had she but known it, had leaned forward with a half-uttered exclamation of delight when the slim figure appeared upon the platform.

"By Jove—there she is!" Roger Railton muttered to himself.

He kept a strained silence, until the first break in the concerto afforded him a safety valve in applauding again and again.

"Little Rita," he repeated softly—"my little Rita, I have found you at last!"

The concert was at its height, when suddenly a hoarse cry of "Fire!" ran through the hall. Then followed an awful scene of confusion, people hustling and trampling upon one another in a mad rush towards the exits.

"This way!" called a firm reassuring voice in Rita's ear. "Keep quiet! Depend on me; I will take care of you!"

Even in that moment of panic the old agony pierced her heart.

"What—you here?" she asked, a ring of scorn in her voice. "Please let me alone, Mr. Railton; I can look after myself perfectly well, thanks!"

The panic and rush had been confined mainly to the lower part of the hall. Rita shook her arm from Roger's grasp, seized her music, darted down the few steps dividing the platform from the artistes' room, and nearly fell into Miss Brailsford's arms.

"Take me away!" she gasped. "He is here! Oh, don't let him follow us!"

"Don't be afraid," Roger said coldly at her elbow. "I am not likely to wish to annoy you by my presence; but forgive me if I insist upon getting you out of this place somehow. You had better remain quietly here till the exits are cleared, for it is only a scare—there is nothing to be alarmed at."

It was one of those accidents that can scarcely be accounted for; there were some practical joking and hustling at the back of the hall, a timid cry was raised that sounded like "Fire!" which resulted in a mad rush to the exits. Outside there was a regular block of spectators, cabs, and policemen.

With some difficulty Roger secured a hansom, revolving in his mind the while the problem how best to make his peace with Rita. In his dilemma he threw himself upon Miss Brailsford's companion, who, woman like, went over to the enemy at once.

"May I not call to-morrow to inquire?" he asked eagerly.

"Certainly, Mr. Railton, if you are to take so much trouble. I will expect you about five o'clock—that is our chief leisure time," the little old maid replied.

On the following afternoon, however, Rita absolutely declined to remain at home as five o'clock approached. The girl was full of conflicting emotions, and she dreaded the old fascination of Railton's presence.

Why had he so cruelly deceived her, and, while pretending, that afternoon long ago, to tell her everything respecting himself, omitted the principal event of his life?

She controlled herself sufficiently to choose a book at the library, and then filled up the time with shopping, until a clock struck six, and she knew she could return home in safety.

A pale crescent moon gave the only hint of approaching darkness in all the wide expanse of turquoise sky. So absorbed was Rita in her own reflections that she did not recognise the subject of them approaching rapidly until he was close at her side. Involuntarily they both halted. He was deeply wounded, wounded to the quick—she could see that in his face.

"Miss Brailsford, an entire stranger, has been kinder to me than you—my old friend!" he said reproachfully.

"Have you forgotten the compact we made—you and I—of undying friendship?" he asked, half smiling at the remembrance."

"I thought our friendship, such as it was, had been broken a great while ago," she answered coldly. "When I quitted the Laurels I left behind me all the old life. Tell me"—with a quick change of tone and feeling—"do you ever see and of them? I wrote when I got better, after my illness; but they never answered my letters. How is Charlie? He must have left school by this time."

"I occasionally run up against him," Roger replied, thankful to find a safe subject to speak about; "but a stormy scene I had with Mrs. Vining cut short our intercourse long ago. The boy always speaks to me however, when we meet, and is continually on the look out for you, I believe. I do not imagine he even knew you had written, or he would have verified your address for himself."

"Poor old Charlie! We were always good friends," Rita said softly.

"By the way, I hear, through Miss Brailsford, that they were kind enough to couple a certain young lady's name and mine together," he went on, after a slight pause. Rita's color rose. They were again on dangerous ground.

"The Honorable Constance Barnwell became Lady Kenyon at the end of last season," he continued, hardly in the tone of a disappointed man. "Hang it all, Rita I can't talk to you in this formal fashion! Mere gossip had linked our names together; I do not suppose she had ever done me the honor of thinking of me in any other way than as a possible partner at dances and tennis matches. As for myself, you ought to know, Rita, that there is only one girl in the whole wide world I could ever and shall ever love!"

They were walking homewards by this time, and at these last words Rita's rapid pace slackened.

When they paused in front of the little house, with its open windows and cool-looking draperies, Miss Brailsford, from behind her geraniums, gave a satisfied nod.

"They are made for each other!" she said.

Never quit your hopes. Hope is often better than enjoyment. Hope is often the cause as well as the effect of youth. It is certainly a very pleasant and healthy passion. A hopeless person is deserted by himself; and he who forsakes himself is soon forsaken by friends and fortune.

At Home and Abroad.

A new branch of jurisprudence is arising out of the bicycle boom, dealing with collisions of velocipedists between themselves and with vehicles of a solid description. Solicitors who take it up must either be bicyclists themselves or "read up" the technicalities of the trade, and there is every prospect that they will reap a rich harvest, for the number of cycle-collision cases at the county courts and before other tribunals is increasing with amazing rapidity.

Considering the nicknames of some of the Presidents of the United States, Washington was "Father of His Country," "American Fabius," "The Cincinnatus of the West," "The Atlas of America," "Lovely Georgius," "Flower of the Forest," "Deliverer of America," "Step-father of His Country" and "Saviour of His Country." Adams was the "Colossus of Independence." Jefferson was the "Sage of Monticello," and "Long Tom." Madison was "The Father of the Constitution." Monroe was the "Last Cocked Hat," and John Quincy Adams the "Old Man Eloquent."

An apparatus called the "Tachocycle" has been invented, the object of which is to increase the speed of a person walking or running, and in fact, to be to the adult what hoop-trundling is to children. It consists essentially of two wheels of any kind of material utilizable for the purpose, but more especially bicycle wheels, and to which any desired dimensions may be given. These wheels revolve freely around an axle that serves as a support, and upon which a person bears through the medium of handles. It is claimed that the apparatus is of great service from a hygienic standpoint, affording a healthy means of exercise to persons who are not disposed to become cyclists.

Mendicancy would appear to be almost as profitable in the outlying suburbs of Paris as in the city itself, where beggars sometimes die leaving substantial legacies behind them for their next of kin. Victor Hayet, aged 49, was supposed to be one of the most destitute and almsworthy inhabitants of Joinville-le-Pont, where he dwelt in a hovel by night and begged on the roads by day. For a week he disappeared from sight, and the police, having been communicated with, went to the hut, burst open the door, as there was no answer to their knocks, and found Hayet dead on the floor inside. His body showed no marks of foul play, and it was clear that the man had died suddenly from heart disease. In a dirty cupboard of his miserable room was found a parcel of bank notes amounting in value to £3 000. The mendicant's dog was heard howling in the cellar. The animal was half mad with hunger, and it choked itself eating a lump of bread thrown to it by the policeman.

A hotel in India is in some respects quite unlike a hotel anywhere else in the world. Every guest has a servant of his or her own. The hotel has some servants, but the guests do not depend upon them at all. My servant takes care of my room, brings me my tea and toast when I arise, prepares my bath, and waits upon me at table. He also keeps my clothes clean and my boots blacked, sees to my laundry, gets me a carriage when I want one, and does my errands. When travelling, he will attend to the tickets and the luggage and make my simple bed on the cars, for India is a country of magnificent distances, involving considerable night travel. There are no regular sleeping cars like ours, but the seats are long enough for the passengers to stretch out on and wide enough to make a reasonable couch, which the traveler provides with his own thin mattress, pillow and wraps. The number of servants in a great hotel is confusing at first. In a long corridor you see one before each door. They usually sleep there, wrapped in a sheet or blanket and curled up on the floor.

STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO, } ss.
LUCAS COUNTY }

FRANK J. CHENEY makes oath that he is the senior partner of the firm of F. J. CHENEY & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of CATARRH that cannot be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

FRANK J. CHENEY

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

{SEAL}

A. W. GLEASON,
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Our Young Folks.

ERIC'S FIRST VOYAGE.

BY J. H. R

"I WONDER who he is? He is not an admiral, is he?" said Eric.

"Who?" said Algernon. "That old fellow with the cocked hat? An admiral, indeed!"

Algernon laughed at the idea. But Eric had great curiosity about the old man, who was always watching them when they sailed their boats in the pond.

Algernon said he was the last living watchman—thinking he was one of the men who took charge of the London streets, and called out the hours all night before there were any policemen.

Eric thought the old man must have been to sea, because he had told him that morning the boat was a tub, and not rightly rigged.

"If you come to see me to-morrow, my lad," he said, "I will give you a proper boat. I live at the house where they sell the newspapers."

Eric knew the ivy covered house, where the door was always open, and the staircase inside was scrubbed white, and in the parlor one saw in little heaps the newspapers brought from town.

There was a library kept at that house, and the few worn books stood in the parlor window for people to come and choose what they would have next.

Eric did not know who to ask for, so he looked in at the parlor door, and said:

"If you please, is the admiral at home?"

"The what?" said a country girl inside.

"I mean," said the boy, "the gentleman with the long coat and brass buttons, and a cocked hat."

After this description the boy was shown upstairs to a neat front room, with windows looking towards the fields, and the willow pond, and the canal.

There his friend with the long blue coat and brass buttons was seated, reading the morning paper.

"Here you are. Will that do?" he said, handing Eric a boat, so quickly that the boy had no thought, except to murmur "Thank you," and to hold it in admiration.

Then he remembered that he ought to take off his cap, especially in the presence of an admiral.

"Well, will it do?"

His friend spoke in a short hard voice, though he had a pleasant smile.

"It's beautiful, sir!"

"Who is that? Do you know?"

The owner of the brass buttons pointed to a picture on the wall.

Even if the boy had not known that Nelson lost one arm and one eye in battle, he would have seen the name painted under it "as large as life."

"Nelson, sir," he said.

The old man told him that his own father began as a boy—"a powder monkey"—under Nelson, and he seemed to be very proud of this.

"Nelson," he said, "was the greatest admiral that ever served the country."

After this, Eric took courage to ask.

"Are you an admiral, too?"

"Why do you think I am?"

"Because, sir, you have a cocked hat."

Oh, how the old fellow laughed! Eric had to laugh, too.

"What do you think I am?" said his friend. "Guess again."

Eric shook his head and gazed at him, and the old man, putting his hand on his shoulder, said:

"I must tell you, then. When I was a boy, about the size of you, I did a very silly thing. I let an older boy persuade me to run away, and we hid ourselves among the cargo of a ship. We were what they call stowaways."

Eric's eyes had grown very large by this time, and the old man's hand was still on his shoulder.

He got a shake by the shoulder when the story began again.

"Don't you ever think of doing such a thing, my lad. Some boys long ago tried to go to sea like that. But I'll tell you what happened to them when the ship was a day or two on the sea.

"There they were down in the dark, sick and miserable, as well as starving, and if they could not make enough noise to be heard above, they would not be let out, because the hatches were fastened down; and if they made themselves heard, and the hatches were lifted, and they crawled out more dead than alive, what a reception they got!

"Everybody angry with them for coming, hard words, perhaps hard knocks, and a miserable voyage, beginning full of troubles and far from friends.

"I must tell you," said the old man, "the poor fellow who led me away, was never got out of the cargo alive. I was taken out after four days, nearly dead. I went into the Navy after, and I have been in many battles.

"I was chasing pirates out on the Chinese coast, and I helped to take Sebastopol, but—count wounds and everything—I never afterwards went through as much as I suffered during those first days when I went as a stowaway."

This ought to have been a warning to Master Eric; but when his friend had said good bye for that day, he went away, thinking that it would be a new game to play with Algernon, if they went up to the canal, and one could be a boy hiding, and the other could be a captain looking for him and pulling him out.

That afternoon they sailed the boat in the shallow of the willow pond, and then they both went off to play the new game. They were empty barges out of use and moored in a wide place like a dock, and at first the new game of stowaway was very much like Hide and Seek.

After a merry half hour, Algernon was playing captain, and thinking himself very grand, pacing the deck of a barge with a telescope of paper under his arm, and Eric on tip-toe crept behind him, and went down to hide.

In a few moments Eric ought to have knocked, and then the search would begin, which always ended in the dragging of the stowaway along by the collar.

But while he was waiting, the worst-tempered man of all the barge owners came shouting and waving his stick—a man the boys knew as Old Thunder.

Algernon did a very mean thing; he stepped from the barge to the bank, and walked off without stopping to find his friend.

He thought of the hour, when he left the canal; why, it was tea-time, and he would be late. He ran away home.

Now, poor Eric, down in the hold of the barge did not hear the man's warning, and in a few minutes, when he began to knock for his playmate, Old Thunder, as deaf as a post, never heard him, but fastened down the hatch.

Then some terrible thing happened. Eric, in deep darkness, after knocking and calling in vain, heard the tramp of a horse's hoofs, and felt the barge grate against something every few moments. The rudder, too, began to make a noise in the water. The boat had begun to move.

He almost felt the darkness. He had stood on some hard blocks and pieces of coal, and cut his knuckles knocking against the roof, and shouted himself hoarse. Everybody knew how deaf Old Thunder was; there was no chance of getting out.

Then, how long was he to be there? Canal boats never went to sea, but he might be moved like this from one place to another, and then left for weeks. In that case he would die all alone in the dark.

He had sunk on a rough bed of coal-dust, almost ready to die of fright now, when all at once the ripple of the rudder and the tramp of the horse stopped.

Eric started to his feet, and yelled with all the strength of his young lungs

"Yes, he is there. You have the boy in there," said a voice that he knew. There was a heavy noise of footsteps on the deck.

He shouted again.

"All right, all right, my boy!" said the voice of the owner of the cocked hat and brass buttons.

Old Thunder raised the hatch, and Eric climbed out, pale, half covered with coal dust, and his hands bleeding.

"You naughty boy! You bad lad!"

Both the men shook their sticks at him. It was nearly as bad as being a real stowaway.

"Oh, thank you, dear Admiral," cried Eric almost in tears, and so grateful that he wanted to cling to his friend, who had come and rescued him.

"Mind, my boy, mind!" shouted the friend very loud. "I am not an admiral: I told you so. I am an old pensioner, child, and this is the only blue coat I have in the world. Don't put your hands on it. You have got a whole load of coals on you!"

It was very fortunate, was it not, that the windows of the old naval pensioner's room looked towards the canal?

He had watched the two boys, and saw that Eric had not come up out of the hold of the barge when Algernon ran away, and when the boat began to be towed along by the horse.

Seeing that something was wrong, he went in all haste across the fields, and was quite out of breath when he reached the canal, a long distance from the point where the boat started.

There the horse was slowly drawing near, and Old Thunder was steering, leaning on the heavy beam at the back, and the old pensioner took the horse by the head, and made the bargeman understand that he was carrying a boy away.

After that day Eric never forgot his old friend; nor did he forget the lecture the old friend gave him for playing a game that might have cost him his life.

As for Algernon, the owner of the cocked hat and brass buttons told him he should never leave a companion and run away to save himself. Algernon boasted he did not care what an old pensioner said. You see, he was hardly the sort of boy one likes.

But Eric did care. And often, if he had a wet holiday afternoon, he would go to hear stories, and tap at the door of the newspaper shop, and ask, with a smile:

"If you please, can I go up to see 'the Admiral?'"

THE JOKE FAILED.—Some people are bright enough to enjoy a good joke, but have not retentive memories, so as to be able to repeat it to others.

Failures of this kind are sometimes very ludicrous. We have a couple of specimens.

A college professor, on parting with a student who had called on him, noticed that he had a new coat, and remarked that it was too short.

The student, with an air of resignation, replied, "It will be long enough before I get another."

The professor enjoyed the joke heartily, and, going to a meeting of the college faculty just afterwards, he entered the room in great glee and said, "Young Sharp made a capital joke just now. He called on me a little while ago, and as he was leaving I noticed his new coat, and told him it was too short, any he said, 'It will be a long time before I get another.'"

No one laughed, and the professor, sobering down, remarked, "It doesn't seem so funny as when he said it."

A red-haired lady, who was ambitious of literary distinction, found but a poor sale for her book. A gentleman, in speaking of her disappointment, said, "Her hair is red if her book is not."

An auditor, in attempting to relate the joke elsewhere, said, "She has red hair, if her book hasn't."

"MON'S YOU'LL KNAR."—Some years ago an old sign painter, who was very cross, very gruff, and a little deaf, was engaged to paint the Ten Commandments on some tablets in a church not five miles from Buffalo.

He worked two days at it, and at the end of the second day the pastor of the church came to see how the work progressed.

The old man stood by, smoking a short pipe, as the reverend gentleman ran his eyes over the tablets.

"Eh!" said the pastor, as his familiar eye detected something wrong in the working of the precepts; "why, you careless old man, you have left a part of one of the commandments entirely out; don't you see?"

"No; no such thing," said the old man, putting on his spectacles; "no; nothing left out—where?"

"Why, there," persisted the pastor, "look at it in the Bible; you have left some of that commandment out."

"Well, what if I have?" said old Obstinacy, as he ran his eye complacently over his work; "what if I have? There's more there now than you'll keep!"

Another and a more correct artist was employed the next day.

HE THOUGHT IT BEST TO POSTPONE IT.—"When we are married, dear Lucy," said the poor man's son to the rich man's daughter, "our honeymoon shall be passed abroad. We will drive in the Bois, promenade the Prado, gaze down into the blue waters of the Adriatic from the Rialto and enjoy the Neapolitan sunsets, strolling along the Chiaja."

"How delicious!" she murmured. "But, John dear, have you money enough to do all this? For pa says I mustn't expect anything until he dies."

John's countenance underwent such a change that she could not help asking him if he felt ill.

"No, darling," he answered faintly, "I am not ill; I was only thinking we had better postpone our marriage until after the funeral."

THE WORLD'S HAPPENINGS.

One Maine man has gone into the unique business of raising doves for weddings, parties, etc.

The old saying that a horse's head is the length of a flour barrel is substantially true. The average head is about 27 inches long; an average flour barrel 29 inches.

Ritualism is growing in the English Church. Incense is used in 304 churches against nine in 1893. Lights on the altar are used in 3566 churches against 581 in 1893.

The bulbs of daffodils have been mistaken for leeks, and boiled in soup with disastrous effect, nauseating the entire family, the children not recovering for several days.

In all cases of internal poisoning from eating injurious plants, etc., the best thing to do is immediately to send for a physician, who, in most communities, is always to be found close at hand.

Only about a dozen words of genuine English origin end with the letter "z," two dozen with the letter "o," and nearly 5000 with "y." "Ough" has eight sounds, as up, on, o, off, uff, oo, and aut.

Persons should be cautious about trying new and unknown vegetables. Even many known are at times unwholesome. Potatoes, when not fully ripe, are deleterious, causing severe bowel complaint and sickness.

Toads in such numbers came with a shower at Topeka, Kan., last week that a freight train, in charge of Engineer Charles Bates, was unable to make a grade just west of the city, and had to back to a siding until a down-bound passenger train had cleared the track.

From present indications America will soon be outdoing France in the consumption of frog flesh. The city of New York alone consumes 600,000 "hams" of frogs during the year. These delicacies are now sold in tin boxes like other conserved meats.

A Belgian journalist thinks that a good way of increasing the revenue would be to lay a tax upon mustaches. He calculates that there are 2,000,000 Belgians who would not part with their mustaches for a paltry ten francs, and that the revenue would thus be augmented by 20,000,000 francs a year.

A man who is attracting great attention in Vienna at the present time is an American giant who has reached the towering height of more than 8 feet. He has been examined by the anatomists of the University of Vienna, and is pronounced one of the most wonderful physical specimens of man.

Monsieur De Brouard, who made a wager that he would travel round the world, starting from Paris, in ten months without sixpence in his pocket, has safely reached Saratow, in South Russia. He will pass through Persia to Merv, Samarcand and Siberia, whence he hopes to work a passage to Japan and the United States.

A young man came from Europe a few days ago and was admitted. Shortly after his sweetheart arrived, and as she had no money he gave her what he had and she was allowed to land. Then the young man, being penniless, was seized by the immigration authorities and ordered to be deported, on the ground that he was likely to be a charge on the country.

Miss M. Jennie Morrill and Henry W. Robinson, both of Waltham, Mass., were married at Mr. Robinson's home, on Tuesday, in their bicycle suits. After the ceremony they started on their tandem for a tour through New Hampshire. The bridesmaids and best man were also in knickerbockers and fetching bloomer costumes. They threw rice after the couple as they wheeled away.

The imported reindeer is flourishing in Alaska, as the imported camel is flourishing in Australia. Thousands of camels were taken to Western Australia from India, and the camel-caravan has largely supplanted the bullock-team. They thrive upon the natural shrubs of the country, such as salt-bush, wattle, acacia, and mulga. They breed well, and the native are better than the freshly imported.

In some villages of France and Switzerland the baker's oven is in great request, especially in the autumn, when many poor people are allowed to gather the windfalls in large orchards. The fruit, cored and quartered, is brought on the most primitive of trays, and is generally dried gratis after the baking is over for the day. Delicious wild berries are also dried in immense quantities.

A venerable couple from a far Western town arrived at night at a seaside tavern. Weary, man and wife went at once to bed. Just as the husband was falling asleep he murmured: "Listen to the surf, Matilda; it's glorious, worth the journey; I haven't heard it for forty years." In the morning they saw no sea from windows or piazza. On inquiry, the husband discovered that a bowling alley had lulled him to rest.

Attorney General Moloney, of Springfield, Ills., replying to the query, "Can women be legally appointed township treasurer?" has rendered an opinion that they can. He holds the law provides that "No person can be debarred from any occupation, profession or employment, except military, on account of sex." A township treasurer is appointive, and women may hold the office if properly qualified. This is a new ruling.

MY FRIEND.

BY LOUISE A. NORTON.

If I could have you for my friend,
I should not ask for more,
Perhaps you'll smile and turn away,
And treat me as of yore.

If I could have you for my friend,
Forgetful of the past;
Those little words that pained me so,
Which now and then were cast.

If I could have you for my friend,
I should so happy be,
And know that God had sent this gift
From heaven, on earth to me.

OF DEATH VALLEY.

The place to which the rather forbidding name of Death Valley has been given, is situated on the borders of California and Nevada. It is one of the loneliest, hottest, and most deadly and dangerous spots, not only in the United States, but in the whole world. It is no more than thirty-five miles long, and eight miles wide. It is a vast, sandy plain, standing something like 200 feet below the level of the sea. Originally a lake, it is now nothing more than the sink of the Amargosa River.

On both sides, throughout its whole length, it is hemmed in by mountain-ranges rising to 11,000 feet above the sea-level; that on the west being the Telescope range, and that on the east, the Funeral range. Looking down the valley from one of the "divides," reveals a region which seems, on the first blush, to be much like other deserts in the Western States of the Union—the Colorado Desert, the Gila Desert, the Mohave Desert, and the rest. But actual experience shows it to be a very different sort of place. In the waste regions just named, the sands are hot and blinding, and water is a rare commodity. In the Death Valley there is water, but it is highly impregnated with chemicals, and is poisonous.

Stretching from the foot of the mountains are glittering fields of salt, alternating with miles of white sand, drawn in places into high mounds by the whirling blasts that sweep down the gorge. The land appears in curving outline like the waves of the sea. The hummocks are made of the so-called "self-rising earth;" the crust is two or three inches thick, and very brittle; and underneath is a thin, slimy, salt mud of unmeasured depth, from which rescue is impossible.

Another curious feature of the valley is the phenomenon known as "salt earth." Innumerable pinnacles, each tapering to a point as fine as a needle, and each a foot big, rise in certain places in close array from the ground. They are as hard as stone, and as dangerous to animal life as sharpened steel.

Death Valley received its name in the days of the Argonauts. About the middle of the year 1860, a wagon train, made up of a party of about thirty emigrants, passed through the Mormon settlements, en route for the New Eldorado. They ascended the Funeral Mountains, threaded their way down one of the few gorges, and entered the valley. Only two men managed to reach the other side; the others were killed by the heat and thirst, or by falling into the hidden quicksands.

Only a few months ago an investigating party sent out by the United States Land Office, found at a lonely spot in Mesquite Valley, an offshoot to Death Valley, an old wagon head, a tire, and some pieces of old iron, relics of the famous emigrant train which descended the valley thirty-six years ago, and perished—every one of the party of forty being lost.

Incidents such as these—and they might be multiplied—earned for Death Valley a most unenviable reputation, and emigrants making across country for the gold-fields, learned to give it a wide berth. But a story got abroad that there was precious metal in the neighborhood, and men, lured by the goblin gold, and consequently careless of their lives, started to explore it.

A survivor from one of the early emigrant trains brought into San Francisco a story of how he stumbled along in a canon of the mountains west of the valley, and found a spring of water; and how, sitting idly by the spring, he broke off a bit of the exposed rock, and was surprised to find it was of metallic substance. It turned out to be silver, and there was a rush to the place, in the hope of finding a rich seam.

A little later, a band of Mexicans came across a gold vein near the Amargosa River bed, east of Death Valley, but the Pintes of the desert came along and killed every one of them.

In 1871, Lieutenant Wheeler, on an exploring trip, ordered his guide to cross the valley on foot. The guide declared it was impossible; so the Lieutenant called two soldiers, who, with fixed bayonets, compelled the man to lead the way. Within two hours, one of the soldiers staggered back to camp, hardly able to walk; the others were lost—they became insane, and strayed away to die.

Not many years ago a Frenchman, named Isidore Daunet, with six companions, attempted to cross the valley on the way to Arizona. The party started, and before they realized their condition, their water-supply was gone. Half wild with their sufferings from thirst, they cut the throats of their pack animals, and drank the spouting blood. Daunet and one other man escaped with their lives; the rest perished. Two days afterwards, the Frenchman tied up his head in a white handkerchief, and put a bullet through his brain. Almost invariably the victims of the valley—save when they fall into the quicksands—go mad before they die.

The animal life of this strange quarter of the globe is, in many respects, unique. One of the greatest curiosities is the deadly "side-winder" snake, which is not found outside the deserts. It a rattlesnake, about eighteen inches long, and flops about from side to side, instead of crawling like other reptiles. Its bite is fatal in three minutes. The gila monster, a poisonous lizard hardly less deadly, is also found there.

Then there are rats with extraordinary ears, which bulge out at the side to an extent known in no other animals. There are "kangaroo rats" and "kangaroo mice," which get over the ground with a succession of vigorous hops. Their hind-legs and tails are surprisingly long and powerful. Dr. E. H. Merriam, of the Department of Agriculture, who led an exploring party into the neighborhood three years ago, says they are not, in the true sense, either rats or mice, but belong to a species quite distinct. Another of the curious rodents of the valley is the scorpion mouse, which feeds on scorpions, and, on the whole, has a good time of it. Again, there are the grasshopper mice, with a strong taste for centipedes, and the pocket mice, with huge wallets outside their throats for the storage of provisions. During March and April, a species of gnat, which might beat a Jersey mosquito at his own game, appears on the scene, and stings both men and "burros" to madness.

Grains of Gold.

Whoever has a bad habit has a master.

We best serve ourselves when we best serve others.

It is a great art to do the right thing at the right season.

Men are most nearly right when they admit they are wrong.

The man who has the "big head" often wears a small hat.

Every man who does wrong, is helping to lead an army of boys astray.

No man has any mercy on his own besetting sin, when he sees it in another.

There are people who never care for music except when they play the first fiddle.

Some people talk much about what a happy place heaven is, and do nothing to make their homes resemble it.

Femininities.

People can generally make time for what they choose to do.

Ugliness of the right sort is a kind of beauty—it attracts the observation and fixes the memory.

Mignonette and yellow, pink or white tulips combine beautifully for an oval in the centre of a dinner table.

When the face is overheated or smarts, burns, irritates, etc., bathing with milk will be found very soothing and nice.

Husband: A bachelor doesn't know what home is. Wife: Neither do some married men until long after midnight.

He: Is this the first time you've been in love, darling? She, thoughtlessly: Yes; but it's so nice that I hope it won't be the last!

Jack: Well, did you propose last night? Tom: Must have done it. I know I meant to do it, and I know we're engaged; so whatever I said must have been all right.

Mr. Blinks, reading: "Man is by nature master, subduer, and tamer of——" Mrs. Blinks: "Hush! I should just like to see you——" "Of the animal kingdom." "Oh!"

At a political meeting in St. Georges, S. C., a few nights ago, fifty-nine candidates for offices spoke. Regrets were freely expressed that all of them could not be elected.

"Maude Pryme is such a conscientious creature." "Her equal doesn't exist. Why, she didn't really enjoy kissing her fiance until he persuaded her that it was a solemn duty."

A short time ago a publisher brought out a book entitled "Advice to Plain Women." Only one copy has yet been disposed of, and that was taken by the office boy to his mother for curl paper.

Practical aunt: Do you think you are qualified to become the wife of a poor man? Sweet girl: Oh, yes; it's all fixed! We are to live in a cottage; and I know how to make cottage pudding.

Haughty lady, who has just purchased a stamp: Must I put it on myself? Post office assistant, very politely: Not necessarily, ma'am; it will probably accomplish more if you put it on the letter."

Grandpa: Don't get scared, Willie; the tiger is about to be fed—that's what makes him jump and roar so. Willie, easily: Oh, I ain't afraid of him, grandpa! Papa's the same way when his meals ain't ready!

"Ah—" asked the lady, "this rouge will not—or—rub off?" "Oh dear, no mem," said the clerk; "it is especially warranted to stand all the kisses of investigation one's feminine friends may choose to try on it."

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that when he was young he liked his praise in teaspoonfuls, that when he got older he preferred it in tablespoons, and that in advanced years he was content to receive it in ladles.

Mutual friend: It really is shocking, dear, the way in which you and your husband quarrel and carry on. I wonder you don't separate from him. Injured wife: What! go away and leave him alone to do just as he likes? Not me!

Elder sister: Come, Clarence, take your powder like a man. You never hear me making any complaints about such a little thing as that. Clarence: Neither would I if I could daub it on my face; it is swallowing it that I object to.

Mrs. Poppin: Don't you miss your husband very much, now that he is away? Mrs. Golightly: Oh! not at all. You see he left me plenty of money, and at breakfast I just set a newspaper up in front of his plate, and half the time I forget that he is not there.

"Don't you think," asked the enthusiastic young minister, that the time is near at hand when wars will be no more?" "Goodness, no!" exclaimed old Mrs. Jason. "War's about the only chance the men folks has to show that they air really any use."

Lawyer, cross-examining: Are you single?

Female witness: No.

Lawyer: Then you are a married woman?

Witness: No.

Lawyer: So you are a widow?

Witness: No.

Lawyer: But, my dear madam or miss, you must belong to one of these classes. As what shall I put you down?

Witness: I am—an—engaged woman.

Many years ago a lady called at the establishment of a celebrated mad doctor. She sobbed bitterly—she was in great trouble. Her son, who had a large fortune, fancied himself a merchant's clerk engaged in extensive mercantile transactions. She called with her son the next day by appointment. The doctor requested her to retire; she left with a small parcel, and the youth presented a bill for payment. The doctor had been prepared for this form of insanity. The young man was pounced upon by four employes and held by their united force under a douche bath upon his head, he screaming all the while for his money. It was discoverd afterwards that the lady had represented herself to be the doctor's wife, and had made extensive purchases from a jeweler, who had sent her clerk with her in a cab to receive the money from her husband.

Masculinities.

The management of the Austrian female prisons is in the hands of female religious orders.

"Who won that long distance walking match?" "Spriggins." "He did! Who was his trainer?" "His baby."

There is no man so friendless but that he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths.

The latest development of meanness is a man who turns his envelopes inside out and uses them a second time.

"My wife and I get along very nicely without quarrelling." "How do you manage it?" "I'm a traveling salesman."

It is now declared that Bryan most resembles in personal appearance the late John McCullough, the tragedian.

Many men show remarkably good taste in their selection of ties until they put their necks into the matrimonial halter.

"Do you have a good deal of trouble changing servants?" "No, indeed; the last only stayed an hour, and the one before didn't even take off her hat."

"Dawson is awfully in love with himself." "Well, it's natural that a man should reciprocate the affection of the only person who ever admired him."

Miss Frank: I believe in woman's rights. Jack Cleverton: Then you think every woman should have a vote? Miss Frank: No; but I think every woman should have a voter.

A Florida boy has shed his skin. It came off in a single piece from his neck down, and is a "perfect cast of the human form, and is about the consistency of hard glue, which it much resembles."

"The doctor ordered your husband whisky for his rheumatism. Does it do him any good?" "He says it does him a world of good, but I notice the twinges come upon him more frequently than ever."

A man at Lexington, Ky., a few days ago thought his young son was dead and ordered a coffin for him. Before the coffin arrived the boy revived, and now stands a good chance for recovery.

Husband, during domestic difference: I don't know how it is that you have such a bad temper. Wife, with whom patience has ceased to be a virtue: It's because I've kept it too long—far too long. No wonder it's bad.

She: You may say what you will, I think you will find that women are less wicked than men. I expect that heaven will be inhabited principally by women. He: Very likely. The men, of course, will generally be found in the smoking room below.

Nell: I felt awfully sheepish last night.

Belle: Why?

Nell: Charlie called me his little lamb.

Belle: Maybe he was trying to pull the wool over your eyes.

"Well," said the philosopher to the man who was tired, "you know that nothing worth having can be got without hard work." "That's what makes me so tired of you philosophers," was the reply. "You are always making that remark, and saying it as if it were something to be thankful for."

Thomas Morris, addressing the Staffordshire, England, iron and steel managers, mentioned having in his possession drawn wire worth $4 33 a pound, or more than $9000 per ton. Hairspring wire is worth $400,000 per ton, and the barbed wire used by dentists in tooth nerve extraction $2 150,000 per ton. The basic material of all is ordinary sheep ore.

The following good story about Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone comes from Cannes. They were sitting near the pulpit; but, when the sermon began, Mr Gladstone turned to his wife, and said irritably, "I can't hear!" "Never mind, my dear," she replied, in a whisper loud enough to reach the pulpit—"never mind; go to sleep. It will do you much more good."

The London Sketch says that Sir Henry Irving once entered a train in London and found that four passengers already occupied the corners of the carriage, and had appropriated the rest of the seats for their portmanteaus. As no one moved Sir Henry continued to stand, holding on to the hat rail. After a while one of the passengers sullenly began to move his luggage from the seat, seeing which the actor remarked in his blandest tone, "O, please don't let me disturb you. I'm getting out at Scotland."

Lord Aberdeen tells the following story of himself. He left London at midnight in a sleeping car for the North. In the morning, when he was awakened, he saw a stranger opposite him.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, "may I ask if you are rich?"

Somewhat surprised, his lordship replied that he was tolerably well-to-do.

"May I ask," continued the stranger, "how rich you are?"

"Well, if it will do you any good to know," was the reply, "I suppose I have several hundred thousand pounds."

"Well," went on the stranger, "if I were as rich as you, and snored as loudly as you, I should take a whole car, so as not to interrupt the sleep of others."

Latest Fashion Phases.

The decided reaction against all heavy interlinings is increasing. Physicians have loudly protested against all the extra weight that these linings, added to already heavy and widely distended skirts, produce.

It was just this state of things formerly that brought back the hoop skirt into favor, which, ugly though it was, and inconvenient, was certainly an improvement on the heavy-lined voluminous skirts that were far too weighty for either comfort or health.

To imitate the coloring of some bird by blending different materials together has been the aim of the milliners, who, it must be confessed, have succeeded much better than would have been supposed possible. The peacock hat is immensely fashionable and is considered suitable to wear with any costume. A dark blue fancy straw shading into green has the entire crown covered with tulle of both blue and green curiously twined together, and put on so full that almost the entire hat is covered. The tulle is also arranged in bows at the back, while straight across the hat, in the form of a spread out fan, is a spray of black feathers, which have been trimmed off until only the points are left full. Underneath the masses of tulle around the brim and at the back where the brim turns up, are magenta-hue roses massed closely together, which give just the warm tone necessary. The combination of coloring is certainly beautiful, but the hat is somewhat heavy in appearance.

A toilette in rose taffeta, with a small black dot, has a quaint double peasant skirt, which forms a short apron in the front and long panels at either side, bordered with black velvet ribbon one inch wide, while three rows of the same trimming adorns the bottom of the front gore.

The blouse bodice of rose mousseline de soie has a deep collet of the same bordered with the ribbon, falling into graceful ripples all round the neck. Two straps of the ribbon extending from the shoulders to the waist ornament either side of the front and back. The ceinture of black satin has a deep point extending over the skirt, and fastens at the back under a chic bow of the same. The silk collar band is encircled by a single row of the ribbon, and has large outstanding loops of lace at the back. The bishop sleeve is of taffeta, and is embellished with many rows of ribbon, extending from the shoulder to the straight cuff of silk, which is bordered with the ribbon tied in a small stylish bow at the back, and is edged with a deep frill of white lace falling over the hand.

An attractive gown in blue demin has a full, plain skirt with a deep hem stitched with white.

A snugly fitted bodice is enriched both front and back with three box plaits of the demin, stitched one-quarter of an inch from either edge, the front ones being trimmed from the neck to the bust with two series of fancy white pearl buttons. The belt is white leather. The draped collar band of white taffeta ribbon has a smart bow of the same at the back. The gigot sleeves are trimmed with a pointed cuff stitched and garnished with pearl buttons. This same style is very effective in either pique or check woolens.

Skirts are worn quite even all around, no longer behind than before. Godets are confined to the back, and little trimming is employed, quite plain skirts being preferred, although a little ornamentation is admissible.

Pretty capes are seen, to accompany dainty calling costumes. They are of old red or old blue, old gold or dull green brocbe, lined and trimmed with black or white mousseline de soie. Flounces, thick ruches, choux, elaborate collars and ribbons are used upon them in profusion.

Traveling gowns are preferably simple, but of perfect finish and style. They are of fine alpaca or mohair or of mixed goods, since the last named are extremely serviceable and do not show dust or moisture. Covert cloth is admirable for the purpose. The tailor-made effect is usually preferred, the skirt being plain, but lined with silk and having only a very narrow haircloth facing, say from three to five inches wide. Stitching, straps and buttons are permitted as ornamentation. The upper part of the costume frequently consists of a coat with loose fronts, opening at will over a chemisette or percale, foulard or thin flannel. The sleeves are not very full. The hat is of light weight and sparsely trimmed, ribbon and quills being considered more appropriate than ostrich plumes, flowers and lace. Loose gloves of suede, of three or four button length, or glace kid gloves form an appropriate finish to the costume.

A fashionable walking costume is of green serge, the tablier of the plain skirt being bordered at the foot and the right side by a bias band of black satin. The left side is adorned with three clasps in black passementerie. The bodice has a bias, stretched back, the front opening over a plastron of white faille gathered at the waist. Motifs of passementerie ornament the sides of the front. The wide collar of white faille is bordered by a bias band of satin, and there is a neck ruche of white lace. The wrist of the bias sleeve is adorned with a motif of passementerie and a lace frill.

Among other indications that hint of autumn styles are skirts ornamented around the foot by narrow bands of velvet put on flat. Others are encircled by similar bands to the height of six or seven inches. This fashion of velvet on worsted goods promises to be a winter feature, for still other skirts are seen having quilles and points of velvet, with velvet figures likewise on bodices in the form of square or round boleros, and motifs variously disposed, with lace or embroidery composing revers or flat coquilles. In fact, velvet ornamentation of costumes both dark and light seems to be the one thing that is fully decided with respect to cool weather wardrobes. The newer form of sleeves, in which a tight, close portion is opposed by a bouffant arrangement, gives an excellent opportunity for combinations of goods.

It is also safe to count upon a variety of attractive cape models and innumerable short sacks, with or without plaits, made quite straight. These latter are having quite a vogue in Paris already, but perhaps they will be less readily accepted here. Long, tight fitting coats of light colored cloth, adorned with large buttons and revers and collar of velvet of various shades, will be worn.

As for hats, it is more difficult to predict what their characteristics will be, for fashions in millinery are more fleeting even than in gowns. Dark felt hats are likely to be largely worn, and black felt hats will accompany many elegant dresses. Ostrich feathers will be employed in all sorts of ways and in profusion, being the principal ornament to be used.

A costume of blue alpaca has the plain skirt adorned around the foot by two narrow bands of blue galloon, the tablier being outlined in the same manner. The blouse bodice has a short, rippled basque and opens in front over a plastron of blue alpaca. The very large sailor collar is of white faille and is trimmed with two bands of narrow galloon. The belt is likewise of white faille, the cravat being of white tulle with lace ends. Lace frills finish the wrists.

Odds and Ends.

ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

Escalloped Potatoes.—Pare and slice potatoes thin. Butter an earthen pudding dish, put in a layer of potatoes and season with salt, pepper and butter and a little finely minced onion, sprinkle with a little flour and add another layer of potato; continue till the dish is full, and pour a cupful of milk over all. Bake three-quarters of an hour.

Eggs Scrambled with Mushrooms.—Drain one-half a can of mushrooms, and cut into slices. Put two tablespoonfuls of butter in a skillet and let it become hot, then add the mushrooms; when these are warmed through add eight eggs, well beaten, with four tablespoonfuls of cream. Cook until eggs are set. Season to taste, and serve.

Almond Charlotte.—To make almond charlotte, soak half a package of gelatine in half a cup of cold water two hours. Blanch one cup of almond meats and chop them fine. Put three large spoonfuls of granulated sugar in a saucepan over the fire, and when it is melted put in the nut meats and stir until they become slightly browned; remove from the fire, and when the meats are cold roll them fine. Put in a double boiler one and one-half cups of milk and the rolled meats, and place over the fire. Beat light the yolks of two eggs, and add to them three quarters of a cup of sugar. Draw the boiling milk to one side of the fire and gradually stir in the egg mixture. Put in the soaked gelatine and stir a few moments; remove quickly from the range, and stand the dish in a pan of ice water. Flavor with one teaspoonful of bitter almond, and beat the mixture until it begins to thicken; then add two quarts of whipped cream, and stir until it is so thick that it cannot settle. Turn into prepared moulds, and set it away in a cool place to become firm.

Canary Pudding.—The weight of three eggs in flour, sugar, and butter. Mix flour and sugar, cream the butter, add it, have the three eggs beaten (whites and yolks separately), add the yolks, lastly the whites; put into a shape, bake or boil. Serve wine sauce.

Worm-eaten Furniture.—Rub the furniture with mercurial ointment, filling in the holes already made, and the ravages will be arrested. Of course, this ointment must not be applied to inlaid brass or buhl.

Handles of Knives.—To take out stains from ivory handles, take a piece of soft flannel, dip it in chloride of lime (mind your fingers have no cuts or abrasions of skin), rub the stain well away, pass the flannel over the whole handle; do all this as quickly as possible, wash the handle in soap and water to get all the chloride of lime off again.

Orange Brandy.—To three quarts of pale brandy, pour into an open vessel, add two pounds fine sugar, then the rinds of six Seville oranges and the juice of twelve; then add quart of skimmed milk boiling hot, and let it stand eight days, stirring it well each day once at least; then on the eighth day strain through a flannel bag and bottle it for use.

Polish.—A good beeswax polish is the best means of rubbing and polishing oak furniture. It will not darken the color of the wood as linseed oil does, and in every respect there is nothing equal for the purpose, not even French polishing.

Bread Poultice.—In a small and perfectly clean saucepan have a teacupful of boiling water. Add breadcrumbs, or the crumbs of a stale loaf; an ounce and a half to two ounces will be sufficient for this quantity of water, and let it soak over the fire for about five minutes. Then turn it into a piece of rag, and spread it of suitable size and evenly. This plan insures its being hot.

Potato Cheese.—Cut some cold boiled potatoes into slices and put them into a well-buttered pie-dish, add some cheese cut into slices, some cayenne pepper and salt, repeating this until the dish is nearly full; then pour over the whole one pint of milk. Bake in a quick oven one hour.

Apple Pudding.—Put into a basin half a pound of bread crumbs, the same weight of apples, after they are peeled, cored, and cut up, a quarter of a pound of sugar, and the same quantity of dried currants (well washed). Beat up a quarter of a pound of butter, whisk into the latter three or four eggs, add some grated lemon-rind, and briskly stir this into the other ingredients. Put the mixture into a buttered basin, tie over with a cloth, and boil gently for three hours, taking care that the water does not boil over the pudding.

Economical Breakfast Dish.—Boil a smoked haddock and an egg; take the bones out of the haddock and the egg out of the shell, mix together, and eat with a fork and spoon. No amount of flesh-food, in moderation, can give quite so much bodily support to a hard worker as a meal like this.

Queen of Puddings.—Half a pint of fine breadcrumbs, one pint of milk, half a teacupful of brown sugar, two yolks of eggs (well beaten), the rind of a lemon grated, a piece of butter the size of half an egg; bake all lightly in a pie-dish, and, when done, spread over a layer of any kind of jam that is preferred. Whip the whites of the two eggs with a dessertspoonful of sifted sugar, in which has been stirred a drop of essence of lemon; spread over the pudding, and replace it in the oven (which should not be very hot) until lightly browned. It may be eaten either hot or cold.

Chicken a la Casserole.—Procure a French casserole of brown earthenware, with a close-fitting cover. Prepare the chicken by singeing and drawing, but without stuffing. Put it in the casserole, cover the breast and legs with slices of bacon, put one pint of hot brown stock in the pot, with four potatoes cut in balls, and six very small onions or garlics. Put the casserole in the oven, and cook until the chicken is tender, usually from forty-five minutes to an hour, without removing the cover. When done, season to taste, and serve in the casserole. The chicken is delicious when cooked in this way. Should it be a tough fowl, more stock should be added, and it should cook at least two hours to be tender.

Hare a la Creme.—Take a fine young hare, partly break off the forelegs, remove the skin from the fillets and haunches, and lard them well. Remove the bone of the hind-legs so as to be able to flatten them to the body, and tie it round neatly. Lay the hare in a good sized baking-tin, salt it well, cover it with hot butter. Bake it for twenty minutes in a fairly-hot oven, basting it frequently with dripping. Cover it with a pint or more of slightly sour cream or milk, then bake it till done, basting with the liquor in the tin. Dish it up on a suitable dish. Add to the contents of the baking-tin a little melted glaze; let it come to a boil, stirring steadily till slightly reduced and thickened, and pour it through a strainer all over the hare. Sweet fresh cream or milk can be used instead of sour. The sauce in this case should be thickened with a little butter worked with flour and fine chopped parsley; and a few drops of vinegar must be stirred in at the last moment.

Overrated.—There is a widespread belief that the five senses of savages are extraordinarily sharp and acute; and in the matter of vision especially, popular opinion would award the palm to the Indian. The popular notion is, however, clearly in the wrong.

An English traveler in South America recently had occasion to test the question. He was greatly surprised to find that his guides could distinguish objects which he could not make out at all.

Thus, when a tiny speck appeared on the landscape of the pampas, a native could tell by the sight and movements what manner of thing it was. He subsequently discovered that this extraordinary range of vision was due more to long experience than to the actual possession of keen eyes. For when he took two of his guides off their native heath, and gave them unfamiliar sights and scenes in a city, neither could see any better than an ordinary person.

As a matter of fact, the five senses of the Indian or savage are dull compared with the five senses of civilized man. A competent authority says that a savage sees but few sights, hears but few sounds, tastes but few flavors, smells but few odors, and that his whole life is narrow and blunt.

RADWAY'S READY RELIEF

For headache (whether sick or nervous), toothache, neuralgia, rheumatism, lumbago, pains and weakness in the back, spine or kidneys, pain around the liver, pleurisy, swelling of the joints and pains of all kinds, the application of Radway's Ready Relief will afford immediate ease, and its continued use for a few days effects a permanent cure.

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CHOLERA MORBUS.

A half to a teaspoonful of Ready Relief in a half tumbler of water, repeated as often as the discharges continue, and a flannel saturated with Ready Relief, placed over the stomach or bowels, will afford immediate relief and soon effect a cure.

Internally—A half to a teaspoonful in half a tumbler of water will, in a few minutes, cure Cramps, Spasms, Sour Stomach, Nausea, Vomiting, Heartburn, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Sick Headache, Flatulency and all internal pains.

Malaria in its Various Forms
Cured and Prevented

There is not a remedial agent in the world that will cure fever and ague and all other malarious, bilious and other fevers, aided by RADWAY'S PILLS so quickly as RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.

Price 50 cents per bottle. Sold by all druggists.

Radway's Pills

Always Reliable, Purely Vegetable.

Perfectly tasteless, elegantly coated, purge, regulate, purify, cleanse and strengthen. RADWAY'S PILLS for the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Dizziness, Vertigo, Costiveness, Piles.

Sick Headache,
Female Complaints,
Biliousness,
Indigestion,
Dyspepsia,
Constipation
And all Disorders of the Liver.

Observe the following symptoms resulting from diseases of the digestive organs: Constipation, Inward piles, fullness of blood in the head, acidity of the stomach, nausea, heartburn, disgust of food, fullness of weight in the stomach, sour eructations, sinking or fluttering of the heart, choking or suffocating sensations when in a lying posture, dimness of vision, dots or webs before the sight, fever and dull pain in the head, deficiency of perspiration, yellowness of the skin and eyes, pain in the side, chest, limbs, and sudden flushes of heat, burning in the flesh.

A few doses of RADWAY'S PILLS will free the system of all the above named disorders.

PRICE 25 CTS. A BOX. SOLD BY DRUGGISTS.

Her Golden Glory.

BY A. S.

"CAN you give one word of hope?"

"The truth were kinder to you, my poor child. You may prolong your mother's life by your loving care of her, but cure is impossible; and it were hardly kind to wish her with us long, seeing how she suffers."

The speaker, a kind-faced man of middle age, looked with softened eyes on the pained pale face of the girl before him. There was something very pathetic about the wan weary looks of the child-woman, in her shabby scanty dress of some dull color that seemed to harmonize with the sadness of her surroundings.

It was a poor house in a shabby genteel street, a street that tradesmen hurried through with gloomy looks, for everything about betokened poverty and debt.

The doctor's well appointed carriage which was now waiting at the door was an object of intense interest to a group of hungry looking, ragged little youngsters who waited to see the doctor get in and be driven away in fine style by his grey-headed coachman.

Dr. James leaned back in his cushioned seat with a troubled look in his keen grey eyes. The picture of that young haggard face haunted him painfully. He was not usually so impressionable.

Yet truly it was sad to see how that poor lonely child clung to the fragile life that was fast drifting away to where there is no pain. He had done his best, but God had willed that no man's best should equal the mercy of His.

Dining in his handsome stately house that night with his grave-eyed motherless little son sitting opposite qim, Dr. James again thought of the girl whose misery had touched his heart.

He caressed his little lad's bright hair with a strong tender touch as he thought of the girl passing the long night-watches alone by the side of her dying mother, thought of her till a great restlessness fell upon him and caused him to finish his dainty meal with haste: then kissing his boy tenderly he said:

"No frolic to-night, Guy: papa has work to do—work, my boy, that must not wait for pleasure."

Then he hurried away that he might not be tempted to stay by the disappointment in his darling's eyes. Bidding a servant pack a bottle of wine, and a few fine bunches of delicious blooming grapes, he prepared to go out into the gloom of the winter's night.

"Shall I order the carriage, sir?" asked the scandalised footman, who esteemed his master's dignity next only in importance to his own.

"No, Dare, I will walk. Give me the basket. Thanks. Oh, and the umbrella; it rains, I see."

A moment later his tall figure was lost in the gloom of the night.

In a dimly-lighted, bare-looking bedchamber, a sick woman slept heavily that sleep that comes to rest the poor body before the great wrestle with death comes to quiet pain for all time.

Standing beside her is the one thing in the world she grieves to leave, her only child—pretty pale Hope Rivers. There is a look of fear and dread in the loving eyes that are fixed so inquiringly upon the grey chill looks of the dying woman.

"Poor darling, she sleeps well, it will rest her. Surely she is easy now, for she smiles.

With a little sob of pain the girl with noiseless steps crossed the room and stood before a little table with a small looking-glass upon it and a few toilet necessaries.

She looked with unpitying eyes upon the wanness of her reflected face. How quiet it was, how miserably the rain beat upon the window pane. She was weary with long watching and her eyes drooped heavily with sleep she dared not take.

So to keep yourself awake she unbraided all the wonderful wealth of golden hair that was her only glory, such living locks of ruddy beauty, that fluttered fairy-like from the fettering comb, and covered her with a mantle of loveliness.

It was really wonderful hair, of great length and silkiness, waving with ripples of light, and luxuriant as the compassionate tresses that veiled the nude fairness of Godiva.

Hope, womanlike, had pride and pleasure in her hair, for it gave her some claim to beauty; but just now that was forgotten, she only brushed and tended it to keep awake.

She paused in her task to listen to the firm strong step of a man in the quiet wet street, then a gentle knock caused her to start. Who could come to them at that late hour? They had no friends. Yet stay, might not the doctor come back? Yes, it must be him.

Snatching up the light, Hope descended the stairs, timid and stepping fast, opened the door, and let in the murk and mist of the wet night, and with it the strong helpful presence she had learnt to prize more than she knew.

"Oh, it is so good to see you. How kind of you to come again!"

Excitement at seeing him so unexpectedly had brought a pink flush to her child-like face, a brightness to her big brown eyes.

"The doctor looked at her amazed. It had never occurred to him to think her pretty, seeing her with all the bloom and freshness of youth crushed out by sorrow. Now, noting her marvellous hair, he thought:

"What wonders happiness would do for this poor child."

But nothing of these thoughts showed in his looks as with a grave kind smile he took the door out of her feeble hold and closed it, saying:

"I thought I would look in to see how you were getting on. How is your mother now?"

"Sleeping so sweetly. Come up and look at her. It makes me almost hopeful to see her so easy."

The doctor followed her up the dark narrow stairs silently, and, seeing the calm sleep of the sick woman, said:

"I do not think she will suffer any more pain. Shade the light there: so She will sleep for hours. Come downstairs, and let me speak to you, child.'

"I have no other lamp," said Hope.

"No matter, the lamplight shines on your window."

Standing beside him in the poor little parlor, with her fair face turned to the lamplight, Hope waited impatiently for him to speak.

Her composure hurt him, for he knew how much it cost her. Moved by a divine compassion, he put out his hand and touched her radiant little head, saying in a tender tone:

"Poor child, you are so young to be left alone in this hour of trouble. Is there no friend who will come and wait with you till this anxiety is ended?"

Hope crept a little closer to him; she felt, just then, her full need of companionship.

In an awe-struck voice, with great questioning eyes that seemed to read his soul, she said:

"There is no one. Will the end come soon?"

"Yes. Oh, my poor little girl, do not look like that. The poor mother will soon be taken beyond all troubles. Yes, child, soon, very soon. It might be days or it might be hours, but it must be soon. That is why I wish you had someone with you. It is not right you should be all alone. You are so young, and it must be such a bitter grief to you."

The tender kindness of his words touched her, she tried to tell him she was grateful to him for his interest in her, that she meant to be brave, but, somehow, words would not come. She felt faint. In truth, but little food had passed her lips that day. The lamplight seemed to dance, then wavered and went out.

Laying her upon the scrubby little sofa, Dr. James opened the window that the cold wet air might blow upon her, then he quickly mounted the stairs to get the only light. The sick woman still slept serenely, the lull before the storm.

He took the flickering light to the lower room where Hope still lay like a dead thing, all her lovely hair falling about her like a golden shroud.

"A dream of gold and white womanhood," thought the doctor as he bent over her, and remembered the wine he had brought with him, he quickly knocked off the neck of the bottle, and then forced some of the life saving fluid between the girl's pale lips.

She came to herself with a start and a vine flush at sight of her bared neck, then with grave womanliness thanked him, and twisted up her hair into a great untidy knot, while she talked to him about her mother.

After he had persuaded her to drink some more wine, he left her to her dreary vigil, shut up alone in that dreary house with a fast dying woman.

The misery of it all weighed down the good doctor's heart. He determined to find someone in the morning who would stay with the poor girl, but between then and the morning lay the long dark night.

Then the inevitable day of dissolution dawned, damp and dreary as only a London dawn can be, and Hope's tired eyes found no exultation in the light, for it showed her more plainly the inexplicable change in her dear one.

"Could you get me a cup of tea, Queenie?" asked a weak voice.

Hope's heart sank; there was no provision against even such a simple meal as this in the bare house, and she had no money or any hope of getting any.

She brought the invalid the juicy grapes the doctor had left, and the rich wine, but though the poor mother took them gratefully, there was still the desire for "a cup of hot tea."

"Try to doze again, darling, while I go to get you one," said Hope, while she hopelessly wondered how that little need could be satisfied.

She quickly went through their poor possessions. Nothing to sell, positively nothing that would raise a shilling.

While she worried over it, her hair, carelessly knotted up, tumbled down. She took it in her hands impatiently—it looked like a rope of gold. How she wished it was! Why, surely it was worth money, though. She would see.

Tying on an old bonnet, she ran from the house, through the poor street into a handsome road, where the shopkeepers were taking down their shutters.

In the window of one, a merry-eyed old man was unveiling a wax empress with wonderfully-dressed tresses.

Hope went in, and with breathless haste, said:

"Do you buy hair?"

"Certainly, miss, as much as we can get, if it is good."

"Is mine good?" said she, taking off her bonnet and shaking down all her golden glory in a dazzling mass of bewildering brightness.

"God bless me! you have beautiful hair. But why sell your chief attraction?" asked the old man, touching the soft meshes gently with covetous hands

"Because I want money. My mother is dying, every moment is an age of agony that I am away from her. Give me money and take my poor hair. I would sell my soul to give my darling ease. Be quick—oh, please be quick. Think how the precious time flies. Give me the scissors; see, there it is, every lock of it. Take it, and give me the money."

The old man took the soft meshes in his hand. He was perplexed, put out by her haste and eagerness. Somehow she mastered his cautious slow nature.

He took a sovereign out of the till; the mass of glittering hair shamed the coin—her pleading eyes, too, told with him—and he took out another and thrust them into her hand, saying:

"There, there, it's more than it's worth. Run away, run away."

Only stopping to buy the few things they needed, Hope hastened home. Thank God, the poor mother still slept.

With loving haste, Hope provided a cosy meal against the time when those loved eyes should unclose again.

But bitter was her disappointment when the sick fancy turned from the food it had cost her so much to get.

How hard it was to see the sand of that dear mother's life slowly dwindle down; surely the love for a mother is the strongest and purest of one's life.

'Tis gratitude blended with pure affection, and a passionate clinging to the most unselfish love life can give.

But love cannot hold life longer than the Divine passion sees fit to prolong it.

So when the good doctor came that day, he found a calm cold corpse with a look of heaven on its face, and by its side a senseless little figure, whose wan face was upturned to the light, and whose graceful head was shorn of all its glory; the crown of womanhood was gone, and like an unthroned queen, Hope lay blessedly unconscious of all things.

"Have I been ill?" asked Hope a month later, opening her hollow eyes in a cosy room, with a kind old woman watching her.

The plump old lady seemed to have lost her tongue, for she went noiselessly away, and in her stead came the doctor with a glad look in his eyes.

Holding her wee white hands, he told her with gentle care of all that had happened since that day when:

She, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair,

touching lightly on his care of her and all the trouble and expense he had borne to do her honor.

Then she told him simply with hot dry eyes of that terrible next morning, and why she had sold her golden glory, and when she had finished, he gravely stooped and kissed her tenderly, as though he took her for evermore into his keeping.

The wonderful snow spread its pure hands upon the earth in benediction, and the Christmas chimes swung out their merry melody, as Dr. James, cold and tired, came out of the chill air into the cosy fire-lit room, where Hope sat with the boy cradled in her arms in the full glow of the fire-light. The sight set his heart singing, it seemed to say, "no more loneliness."

Crossing to their side, he took them both in his big arms and said:

"I can't let you go, Hope, my darling. I have told the rector to get another teacher for his boys. We need you most, this little lad and I. Say you will stay, darling: be my wife, the mother of my boy. I love—oh, I love you more than I can say."

Hope put a timid hand about his neck, and drew his head beside his boy's on her breast, and kissed him coyly with pure fresh lips that had never so caressed another man.

VERY POLITE.—The Saxons are a very polite people, so over-polite that they not infrequently bring down ridicule upon themselves.

It used to be told in Dresden that a stranger in the city was one day crossing the great bridge that spans the Elbe, and asked a native to be directed to a certain church which he wished to find.

"Really, my dear sir," said the Dresden r, bowing low, "I grieve greatly to say it, but I cannot tell you."

The stranger passed on, a little surprised at this voluble answer to a simple question. He had proceeded but a few rods, when he heard hurried footsteps behind him, and, turning, saw the same man running to catch up with him.

In a moment his pursuer was by his side, his breath nearly gone, but enough left to say:

"My dear sir, you asked me how you could find the church, and it pained me to have to say that I did not know. Just now I met my brother and asked him, but I grieve to say that he did not know either."

A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.—A young man in Kingston, N. Y., being out of employment, recently requested of a former employer a letter of recommendation to aid him in securing a situation.

The letter was written and handed to the applicant, who was totally unable to read it, as was every person to whom it was shown.

A friend advised him to take it to a printing office, where it could be deciphered, as compositors are noted for being able to make out the worst specimens of writing.

It was given to compositors in various printing establishments, and in turn given up without being deciphered. At last, as a forlorn hope, it was given to the prescription clerk in a drug store, who had the reputation of being able to read anything.

The man of drugs took the paper, gazed at it long and thoughtfully, and finally seized an empty quart bottle, and hurried round the store, taking some fluids of various colors from sundry bottles, and finally shaking the compound most vigorously.

Then, handing it to the owner of the letter of recommendation, he remarked to that much-astonished individual, "Two dollars—and a very good cough mixture it is."

HE GROWS YOUNGER.—An aged resident of Washington who is close on becoming an octogenarian, is undergoing a peculiar process of physical regeneration.

About a year ago he contracted pneumonia, and his life was for some time despaired of, the doctors saying his right lung was hopelessly wasted.

He recovered, however, but when just able to hobble about he fell and broke his thigh bone, and was confined to the hospital again for six months. Since leaving, however, his physical condition has improved remarkably.

His lungs began to open up until they became almost as well as ever; his skin shed off and a new skin grew, and his hair and beard, which were snow white, are now coming out jet black. His limbs and muscles seem to have taken a new lease of life, and he says if he continues to grow younger, he will get married again and grow up with the country.

Humorous.

THE CAMPAIGN.

Now politics are growing hot,
And politicians talk a lot.

They harp on subjects worn and old.
Some are for silver, some for gold.

The tariff, too, is much discussed,
Till every voter is nonplussed.

Whene'er an argument begins,
The one who talks the loudest wins.

Meanwhile the business man is mad
Because his trade is very bad.

But he's all right if he is wise,
He only needs to advertise.

Vegetable philosophy—Sage advice.

Flat falsehood—Lying on your back.

How to get at the root of a thing—Dig.

A bad thing for small tradesmen to be out of—Temper.

What grows bigger the more you contract it?—Debt.

What is that which flies without wings?—An arrow.

What percentage is charged by the architect of his own fortune?

"I am completely done up," said the negligee shirt as it left the laundry.

A Louisville dairyman has been fined for not putting enough milk in his water.

Remarkable fact—It is no uncommon thing for hot words to produce a coolness.

"I wonder what time it is?" said a farmer as he looked at one of his turnips.

Many young men are so improvident that they cannot keep anything but late hours.

The fire was having a red hot time when the cook came in and put a damper on it.

Why is a sheet of postage stamps like distant relatives?—Because they are but slightly connected.

Paul: I wonder if that chair is big enough for two?

Virginia, inadvertently: Oh, yes; I know it is.

Jones: Would you call a man a coward because he won't fight?

Smith: I might if I was quite sure he wouldn't.

A Western paper announces that upon the occasion of a recent boiler-explosion in the neighborhood "between three and four men were killed."

Blobbs: I heard the other day of a dog that wears eye glasses.

Slobbs: That's nothing. Didn't you ever hear of fly specks?

"Begorra," said Pat, with a start, as he opened a bottle of champagne for the first time—"the fool that filled this quare bottle must have put in two quarts instid av wan!"

A little boy having broken his rocking-horse the day it was bought, his mother began to rebuke him, and to threaten to box his ears. He silenced her by inquiring, "What is the good of a horse till it's broke?"

Editor: Doctor Emdee has sued us for libel.

Assistant: What for?

Editor: I wrote "The doctor took the patient's pulse before he prescribed for him," and the intelligent compositor set it up "parse."

Babson: How is it that you are always in debt? You should be ashamed of yourself.

Jabson: Come, now; don't be too hard on a fellow. You would perhaps be in debt, too, if you were in my place.

Babson: What place?

Jabson: Able to get credit.

Mrs. Nextdoor: Your boy climbed over the fence and ran all over my flowerbeds.

Mrs. Suburb: Horrors! They had just been watered, hadn't they?

Mrs. Nextdoor: N—o.

Mrs. Suburb: Oh, well, never mind; the exercise won't hurt him if he didn't get his feet wet.

A rural Georgia preacher, finding the weather too warm, pulled off his coat and preached in his shirt sleeves. After the sermon a good brother, thinking an editor who was present would make a sensation of the incident, said to the parson:

"I don't suppose you know, when you pulled off your coat to-day, that one of them newspaper fellers was in the meetin'?"

"Yes, I did," replied the preacher. "But I had my eye on it all the time!"

His face was pinched and drawn. With faltering footsteps he wended his way among the bustling throng. Anon he paused.

"Kind sir," he suddenly exclaimed, "will you not give me a loaf of bread for my wife and little ones?"

The stranger regarded him not unkindly.

"Far be it from me," he rejoined, "to take advantage of your destitution. Keep your wife and little ones, my man. I do not want them."

Turning upon his heel, he walked away.

HANDSOMELY PAID FOR.

"Yes, exorbitant prices have been paid us for a new mode—an original conception of Madame's," a fair artiste in millinery recently informed the writer.

Ladies who pride themselves on their dressing, and strive to be a la mode in everything, occasionally make us extraordinary offers.

"We had received some new models from Paris," the lady continued, "and one especially received the approval of Madame, while we girls went into ecstasies over its originality.

"She was sure it would 'catch on,' and accordingly half-a dozen facsimiles were produced by our most skilful workers, while the sample was about to occupy a prominent place in our show-window, when one of our best customers honored us with a visit.

"This person is an authority on dress and her style is widely copied, so Madame is always pleased to have her take something new; therefore the dainty confection was held up for her inspection without delay.

"We were not disappointed, for the lady at once made an offer, begged of Madame to sell her the bonnet, and asked quite feverishly: 'Has the same been shown to any other person?'

"'Nobody has enjoyed that privilege but yourself, outside the shop,' our principal assured her; whereupon our ultra-fashionable patron again inquired if Madame had copied it—were there any reproductions in our work-room?

"She was informed that six imitations were about to be offered for sale, when she begged that the lot should be sent to her home, extorting a promise from her not to use the shape, as she wished no one else to have a head-dress like it.

"Of course, these terms were agreed to, the whole cluster of dainty bonnets costing their fair purchaser a considerable penny.

"Another of our patrons was so entranced with a certain style, that she not only paid handsomely for it, but requested a written agreement from Madame, in which the latter consented to the various terms set down by our patron—the drift of which was a promise not to use the particular style for any other person; we girls signing our names to the declaration, and making merry over it when the lady had departed.

"Yet another instance recently came to my hearing, though it does not concern our establishment. A handsome sealskin jacket—its value was a trifle over five hundred dollars—fascinated a lady so much that her husband was persuaded to purchase it for her, and he was about to make out a check for the money, when his wife asked if the style had been copied, or was it a copy of another.

"She was told that an exactly similar one had been sold to a lady in the same town but the preceding week, she refused to have it, but left an order for one to be made specially for her from a design of her own, which she agreed to forward a few days later. When finished, this coat was really far more beautiful than the one she had rejected, though its cost was less.

"While I am about it I may as well tell you of an occurrence which happened in a costumier's, where my sister is engaged—a large house in the State, though I do not think I must tell you the town.

"One of their best customers obtained the curious and not altogether honest permission to have a coat, which had been specially made for her of a most expensive material exhibited in their windows as if for sale, with a ticket on which a price in excess of double the true value, marked in bold figures, was placed.

"The originality of the material and its unique make-up attracted undue attention, especially as its value was set at so much.

"Then, when it had been displayed prominently for eight or ten days, my lady appeared garbed in the attractive coat and was complimented exceedingly on her good taste—all due to the regal price, of course,—a trick the lady was aware would have beneficial results for her vanity.

"Just another instance, I recollect. A lady once sent us a variety of her own designs for hats and bonnets, informing us that we were not to copy them afterwards for our own use under penalty of the law.

"Madame declared she would not have them displayed in her window for worlds, they were so inartistic and inappropriate. The lady paid a fee for the privilege, as she termed it, and was most gracious because Madame had followed her wishes to the most minute detail.

"Yes, vanity costs its victims a deal of money, and is fraught with unhappiness and disappointment besides."

A glass door swung gently open, and our fair informant was called away.

FAILURE AND SUCCESS.—The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it—so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience, would have achieved success. In business sometimes the outlook may seem darkest when really things are on the turn. A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success. There is no failure except in no longer trying, no defeat except from within, no really insurmountable barrier save our own inherent weakness of purpose.

BROCHURE SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS and get a little book free.

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RIPANS TABULES REGULATE THE STOMACH LIVER AND BOWELS AND PURIFY THE BLOOD.

RIPANS TABULES are the best Medicine known for Indigestion, Biliousness, Headache, Constipation, Dyspepsia, Chronic Liver Troubles, Dizziness, Offensive Breath, and all disorders of the Stomach, Liver and Bowels.

Ripans Tabules are pleasant to take, safe, effectual, and give immediate relief. Sold by druggists.

SALESMEN WANTED—$100 to $150 per month and expenses. Staple line; position permanent, pleasant and desirable. Address, with stamp, KING MFG. Co., T 187, Chicago.

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WIG

IN HAIR.

Inventors of the CELEBRATED GOSSAMER VENTILATING WIG, ELASTIC BAND TOUPEES, and Manufacturers of Every Description of Ornamental Hair for Ladies and Gentlemen.

Instructions to enable Ladies and Gentlemen to measure their own heads with accuracy:

TOUPEES AND SCALPS. INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.
No. 2. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 3. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 4. Over the crown of the head.

FOR WIGS, INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck, No. 2.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.

They have always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frisettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

Dollard's Herbanium Extract for the Hair.

This preparation has been manufactured and sold as Dollard's for the past fifty years, and its merits are such that, while it has never yet been advertised, the demand for it keeps steadily increasing.

Also DOLLARD'S REGENERATIVE CREAM to be used in conjunction with the Herbanium when the Hair is naturally dry and needs an oil.

Mrs. Edmondson Gorter writes to Messrs. Dollard & Co., to send her a bottle of their Herbanium Extract for the Hair. Mrs. Gorter has tried in vain to obtain anything equal to it as a dressing for the hair in England.

MRS. EDMONDSON GORTER.
Oak Lodge Thorpe,
Norwich, Norfolk, England.

Nov., 2, '93.

NAVY PAY OFFICE, PHILADELPHIA.

I have used "Dollard's Herbanium Extract. I Vegetable Hair Wash," regularly for upwards of five years with great advantage. My hair, from rapidly thinning, was early restored, and has been kept by it in its wonted thickness and strength. It is the best wash I have ever used.

A. W. RUSSELL, U. S. N.

TO MRS. RICHARD DOLLARD, 1223 Chestnut st., Phila.

I have frequently, during a number of years, used the "Dollard's Herbanium Extract," and I do not know of any which equals it as a pleasant, refreshing and healthful cleanser of the hair.

Very respectfully,
LEONARD MYERS.
Ex-Member of Congress, 6th District.

Prepared only and for sale, wholesale and retail, and applied professionally by

DOLLARD & CO.
1223 CHESTNUT STREET.

GENTLEMEN'S HAIR CUTTING AND SHAVING. LADIES' AND CHILDREN'S HAIR CUTTING.
None but Practical Male and Female Artists Employed.

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PIANOS AND ORGANS

Were Awarded FOUR MEDALS AND DIPLOMAS, also chosen for 32 STATE AND FOREIGN BUILDINGS AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.

Twenty Medals and Diplomas were taken by makers of the raw materials used by me in constructing the Crowns.

The Crown is the only Piano which contains the **Wonderful Orchestral Attachment and Practice Clavier**, the greatest invention of the age and by the use of which you can imitate perfectly the Harp, Zither, Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, Clavicord, Dulcimer, Spinet, Harpsichord, Music Box, Autoharp, Bag Pipe, Etc.

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Don't buy a Piano or Organ until you meet and examine a "Crown" and get prices.

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Lock Haven, Clearfield and Bellefonte Express (Sleeper) daily, except Saturday, 11.30 p m.

FOR NEW YORK.

Leave Reading Terminal, 4.10, 7.20, (two-hour train), 8.30, 9.30, 10.30, 11.00 a m, 12.45, (dining car), 1.30, 3.05, 4.00, 4.02, 5.40, 6.10, 7.30, 8.10 (dining car) p m, 12.10 night. Sundays—7.10, 8.30, 9.30, 10.10, 11.50 (dining car) a m, 1.30, 3.55, 6.10, 8.10 (dining car) p m, 12.1 night.

Leave 24th and Chestnut Sts., 3.55, 7.50, 10.09, 10.32, 11.04, a m, 12.57 (Dining car), 3.08, 4.10, 5.12, 8.10 (dining car), 11.45 p m. Sunday 3.55, 10.32, a m, 12.14, (dining car), 4.10, 5.12, 5.12, (dining car), 11.45 p m.

Leave New York, foot of Liberty street, 4.30, 8.00, 8.15 9.00, 10.00, 11.30 a m, 1.30, 2.00, 3.30, 4.00 (two-hour train), 4.30 (two-hour train), 5.00, 6.00, 7.30, 9.00, 10.00 p m, 12.15 night. Sundays—4.30 9.00, 10.00, 11.30 a m, 2.00, 4.00, 5.00, 6.00 p m, 12.15 night.

Parlor cars on all day express trains and sleeping cars on all night trains to and from New York.

FOR BETHLEHEM, EASTON AND POINTS IN LEHIGH AND WYOMING VALLEYS, 4.05, 8.00, 9.00, 11.00 a m, 12.30, 2.00, 4.30, 5.30, 6.34, 9.45 p m. Sundays—8.24, 8.32, 9.00 a m, 1.10, 4.20, 6.34, 9.45 p m. (9.45 p m, does not connect for Easton on Sunday.)

FOR SCHUYLKILL VALLEY POINTS.

For Phœnixville and Pottstown—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 12.45, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 5.30, 11.30 p m, Accom., 4.20, 7.45, 11.05 a m, 1.42, 4.35, 5.51, 7.20 p m. Sundays—Express, 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m Accom., 7.30, 11.35 a m, 6.15, p m.

For Reading—Express, 8.45, 10.05 a m, 12.45, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 5.30, 11.30 p m. Accom., 4.20, 7.45 a m, 1.42, 4.35, 5.51 7.20 p m. Sunday—Express 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Accom., 7.30 a m, 6.15 p m.

For Lebanon and Harrisburg—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, (Saturdays only 2.30), 4.05, 5.30 p m. Accom., 4.20 a m, 1.42, 7.20 p m. Sunday—Express, 4.00, 7.30 a m. Accom., 5.15.

For Pottsville—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, Saturdays only 2.30, 4.05, 5.30, 11.30 p m. Accom., 4.20, 7.45 a m, 1.42 p m. Sunday—Express, 4.00, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Accom 8.30 p m.

For Shamokin and Williamsport—Express, 8.35, 10.05 a m, 4.05 11.30 p m. Sunday—Express, 9.05 a m, 11.30 p m. Additional for Shamokin—Express, week-days, 5.30 p m. Accom., 4.20 a m. Sundays—Express, 4.00 a m.

For Danville and Bloomsburg, 10.05 a m.

FOR ATLANTIC CITY.

Leave Chestnut Street and South Street Wharves: Week-days—Express, 9.00, a m, 2.00, (Saturdays only 3.00), 4.00, 5.00, p m. Accommodation, 8.00 a m, 4.30, 5.30 p m. Sundays—Express, 9.00, 10.00 a m. Accommodation, 8.00 a m, 4.45 p m.

Leave Atlantic City depot—Week-days—Express, 7.35, 9.00 a m, 3.30, 5.30 p m. Accommodation, 6.50, 8.15 a m, 4.52 p m. Sundays—Express, 4.00, 5.37, 8.00 p m. Accommodation, 7.15 a m, 4.15 p m.

Parlor Cars on all express trains.

Brigantine, week-days, 8.00 a m, 4.30 p m.

Lakewood, week-days, 8.00 a m, 4.15 p m.

FOR CAPE MAY.

Week-days, 9.15 a m, 4.15 p m. Sundays, 9.15 a m.

Leave Cape May, week-days, 7.35 a m, 3.40 p m. Sundays, 3.40 p m.

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